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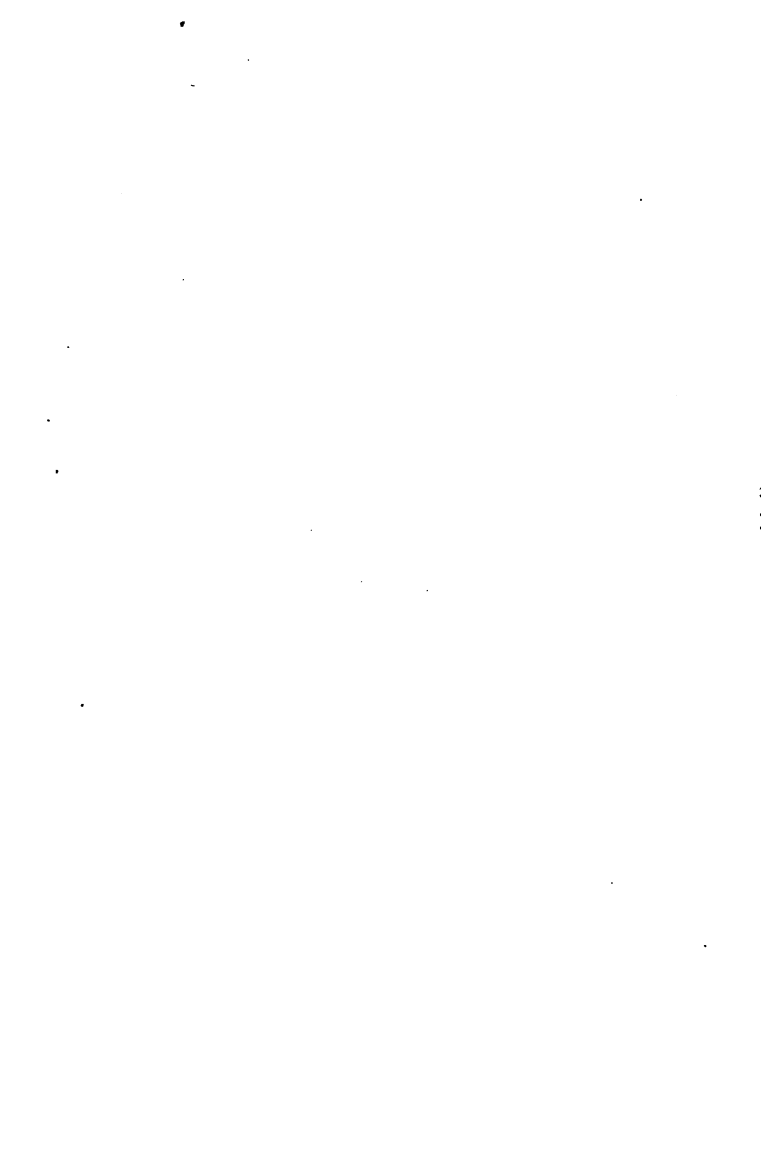
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— IN —

ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

BY THE

REV. ARTHUR RITCHIE, D.D.

Rector of St. Ignatius' Church, New York City

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SPIRITUAL STUDIES IN
ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL
VOLUME IV.
LXXXII.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."—St. John x. 1-3.

Exposition.—St. Augustine comments as follows: "There are many who, according to a certain common usage of this life, are called good people, good men, good women, harmless, and, so to say, observing the duties enjoined in the Law; and yet are not Christians: and these commonly give themselves airs, like the Pharisees here, *Are we blind also?* But because in all these things that they do, while they know not to what end they refer them, they do them to no purpose, the Lord hath propounded in the les-

son of to-day a similitude concerning His flock and the door by which is the entering into the sheepfold. . . . To each individual who leads a good life, the profit of it ought to be this, that it should be given him to live forever; if it be not given a man to live for ever, what does his good life profit him? Because they cannot be said even to live well, who either through blindness know not, or through inflation of mind despise that which is the end of good living. Now no man has a true and sure hope of living forever, unless he acknowledge the Life, which is Christ; and enter by the door into the sheepfold. Now it is the aim generally of such persons, to persuade other men to live good lives, and yet not to be Christians. They wish to climb over by another side, to plunder, and to kill; not as the Shepherd, to preserve and to save. So there have been certain philosophers, who have even dared to say to men, Follow us; hold our sect, if ye would live happily. But they entered not by the door: what they wished was to undo men, to slaughter and to kill."

St. Chrysostom says: "Observe the marks of a robber; first, that he doth not enter openly; secondly, not according to the Scriptures, for this is the *not by the door*. Here also He refer-

eth to those who had been before, and to those who should be after Him, Antichrist and the false Christs, Judas and Theudas, and whatever others there have been of the same kind. And with good cause He calleth the Scriptures a door, for they bring us to God, and open to us the knowledge of God; they make the sheep, they guard them, and suffer not the wolves to come in after them. For Scriptures, like some sure door, barreth the passage against the heretics, placing us in a state of safety as to all that we desire, and not allowing us to wander; and if we undo it not, we shall not easily be conquered by our foes. By it we can know all, both those who are, and those who are not shepherds."

Isaac Williams says: "He that entereth in by the door is a shepherd, not the Shepherd, for such is Christ alone, as in the subsequent parable; but now Christ is the door, and shepherds are those to whom He commits the sheep. Such shall be they to whom Christ entrusts His sheep in distinction from the chief priests and scribes. Here are the three marks of the true pastor; that he entereth by the door, which is Christ, by a lawful entrance for *no man taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*; that to him the porter

openeth, which is the Holy Spirit, conferring at his ordination spiritual gifts and powers; and thirdly, the guidance and personal knowledge of his flock, which again shows itself in some essential points, as seen in the description of him which follows. But although a lawful entrance by ministerial succession is indeed essential, yet it is but a small part of what is signified by Christ the Door: no proud prelate; no ambitious, or covetous, or ease-loving priest; no self-confident deacon enters by Christ the Door though in right lineal descent from the Twelve or the Seventy."

Stier says: "The porter in the similitude is a servant whose province, according to ancient custom, was to remove the wooden bolt from within, and guard the door which was generally but ill-secured. . . . According to the opinion of antiquity it is the Holy Spirit, the Guardian of the Church, Who opens the door of the kingdom of God, co-operating with the Redeemer and His shepherd-office."

And again: "Not only in the ancient poets, but even in our times and in the West, shepherds are found to give the literal sheep distinctive names. But the calling of the redeemed by name has a very profound significance in the similitude."

First Thought.— Our Lord ever lays stress upon the necessity of a true ministry for the carrying on of His work in the world. He has been pleased in all ages to avail Himself of the services of men as His priests, but they must be shepherds according to His ordinance. He who enters not in by the door to the sheepfold is not from Him.

1. His ministers must enter by the door, that is, by Himself; first by a valid ordination in the Apostolic line of His appointment. Secondly, they must enter in by Him through soundness in His doctrine. The Jewish rulers were of valid appointment in the true line, but they failed to interpret the Scriptures of Christ and tried to enter the sheepfold by climbing up another way. So they proved themselves no shepherds of the sheep but thieves and robbers.

In like manner any Christian minister who fails to teach the true doctrine of Christ becomes a false shepherd in the Master's eyes. Thirdly, the true shepherd must enter in by the door, that is, Christ, through personal holiness, and a life ever in sacramental union with Him. The unholy priest ministers valid sacraments indeed, so far as his people are concerned, but to the damnation of his own soul.

2. The people of God are not without their

share of responsibility in the same matter. They may not tolerate the ministry of any not in the line of the Apostolical Succession, saying that they are very good men, which indeed they may be, but thieves and robbers when presenting themselves as ministers of Christ. The servants of God have need to take strong ground for the true ministry in these days of easy-going laxity. Again, the servants of God must be jealous for the true doctrine of God. They cannot tolerate any departure from the creeds of the Church, they cannot but feel that the teacher who is unfaithful to our Lord's revelation is no true pastor entering in by the door, but a thief and a robber to be resisted and expelled from the sheepfold. Yet further, it is the part of lay-folk in the Church to strive with great diligence to live in sacramental union with the Lord, for so only can they hope to have place in the sheepfold; there is no entrance for sheep or for shepherd but the Door.

Second Thought.—Under a very simple and homely figure the work of the Holy Ghost in the Church is referred to by our Lord, as that of the porter in the sheepfold, yet it is most suggestive. The ministers of Christ are admitted by the Holy Ghost to their function in the Church by their ordination, but besides that

the divine Spirit must open the door for them in all their ministrations, if those ministrations are to effect anything. He opens their minds to understand the Word of God, that they may preach with power; He makes wise their hearts that they may rightly counsel those who seek of them light from the Lord. He opens the door to them for a good ministry by filling them with the spirit of prayer, that they may prevail in their intercessions; He stands beside them at the altar that they may offer the unearthly sacrifice acceptably to the Most High. He opens the door that the fulness of the divine grace may flow in upon their souls, to make them mighty in their work for Christ; He illuminates their understandings with the vision of the Master's love that they may be tireless in His service. When the door of the sheepfold is thus opened by the divine Porter to Christ's true shepherds, it is not wonderful that the sheep hear their voice, and that many are led by them in the way of eternal life. But the sheep may not on their part forget that the same divine Porter, the Holy Ghost, must also open their understandings, hearts, and souls, if they are to profit by the ministrations of their pastors. Except the Holy Ghost open the door, the sheep hear the voice of their shepherd to no purpose.

Third Thought.—There is nothing much more needful than that the ministers of Christ should call their own sheep by name, if they are to lead them safely heavenward. The pastor must know the inner lives of his flock if he is to profit them spiritually. There is the outward life, amid the surroundings of this world, in which it is thought very important that the priest should know his people, and in which they are generally very willing to have him know them, if they like him personally. But this is the most superficial sort of pastoral knowledge. Many are ready to go to the shepherd with their fears and trials, in times of sickness and affliction, and some of the depths of the soul may so be sounded by him. But to know his sheep in any real sense, that he may call them by their names when he brings their lives before God day by day in his intercessions he must have heard their deeper secrets, the tale of their soul battle with sin. The priest has small opportunity indeed of being a good shepherd to such as will not come to him opening their grief in the sacrament of Penance.

LXXXIII.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."—St. John x. 4, 5.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "Shepherds indeed do the contrary, for they follow after them; but He to show that He will lead all men to the truth, doeth differently; as also when He sent the sheep, He sent them not out of the way of the wolves, but in the midst of wolves. Far more wonderful is this manner of keeping sheep than ours. . . . *And a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.* Certainly here He speaketh of Theudas and Judas, (*for all as many as believed on them were scattered,*) or of the false Christs who after that time should deceive. For lest any should say that He was one of these, He in many ways separateth Himself from them. And the first difference that He setteth down is His teaching from the Scriptures; for He

by means of these led men to Him, but the others did not from these draw men after them. The second is, the obedience of the sheep; for on Him they all believed, not only while He lived, but when He had died; the others they straightway left. With these we may mention a third difference, no trifling one. They did all as rebels, and to cause revolts, but He placed Himself so far from such suspicion, that when they would have made Him a king, He fled; and when they asked, *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar?* He bade them pay it; and Himself gave the two drachm piece. Besides this, He indeed came for the saving of the sheep; *That they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*, but the others deprived them even of this present life. They betrayed those who were entrusted to them, and fled; but He withstood so nobly as even to give up His life. They unwillingly, and by compulsion, and desiring to escape, suffered what they suffered; but He willingly and by choice endured all."

Sadler comments as follows: "In Palestine the flocks at night were gathered into folds, or enclosures surrounded by walls, and having one door which was opened and shut by a porter or door-keeper, who only admitted those who had flocks in the fold. More than one flock

was often gathered for the night into one fold. In the morning when it was time to lead out the flocks to pasture, each shepherd would come to the door, and the door-keeper would immediately recognize him, and open to him: so that, if any one entered in any other way, as by climbing over the wall, it was a sign that he had no right of entrance, and had come for some bad purpose. When any shepherd to whom one of the flocks belonged came to collect and lead out his sheep, he called aloud and all the sheep heard, but the sheep of the particular flock of which he is the shepherd recognizes his voice as that of their shepherd. He has given names to them, and they hear their names called, and flock to him; and so he leads them out to pasture, and when he puts forth out of the gate his own sheep, he goeth before them, and they follow him, because they know his voice. . . . Godet mentions a traveler who, meeting a shepherd bringing home his flock, changed garments with him, and thus disguised proceeded to call the sheep. They, however, remained motionless. The true shepherd then raised his voice, when they all hastened to him, notwithstanding his strange garments."

Thompson, in *The Land and the Book* says: "I never ride over these hills, clothed with

flocks, without meditating upon this delightful theme. Our Saviour says of the good shepherd, *When he putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him.* This is true to the letter. They are so trained and so tame that they follow their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the villages, just where he pleases. Any one that wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of the stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is the simple fact."

First Thought.—When our Lord speaks of the good shepherd *putting forth* his sheep, there is the suggestion of constraint, a certain compulsion necessary in order to bring them out of the fold to follow the shepherd to the pasture lands. It is most true that the way of the Christian life is hard to the natural man. We realize that very much that is dear to us in the world must be given up, yet we cling to the things which must be so surrendered, perhaps some of our pleasantest friendships, our favour-

its pursuits, the recreations in which we find the most satisfaction. Then there are so many things required of us in the ways of the Church which are hard, almost unbearable sometimes; as the rules of abstinence, the using of confession, and the like. The sheep shrink from such a life outside the safe and comfortable fold, therefore the Good Shepherd has to thrust them out with His own loving compulsion. He declares indeed that His yoke is easy and His burden light, but this does not seem to be true at the first. The believer perceives only the hardness of His service, as viewed from the standpoint of the natural man, and realizes not the compensations, and the consolations. When once one has learned the might of prayer, and the sweetness of sacramental grace, the bliss of self-sacrifice and the inspiration of walking on after Him, the way no longer seems hard, nor the burden heavy to be borne. We must endure the hardness, for so only is the Christ-character formed in us. Let us think how vastly different the state of the blessed saints in heaven is from ours here below; and is it likely that so great a transition should be effected without labour and a measure of pain? We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Therefore as wise sheep let us not resist the loving compulsion wherewith

the Good Shepherd thrusts us out from the fold, but welcome His gracious solicitude on our behalf.

Second Thought.—It were sad indeed if the sheep were thrust out of the fold to wander at large, seeking pasture unguided; but the Good Shepherd does not so deal with His flock: "When He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them," the sheep have but to follow Him. We may lament the fact that we can no longer see Him, but must take His presence with us upon faith; howbeit He reminds us that His sheep know His voice. Very wonderfully has He brought it about that we may always, if we will, hear His voice and recognize it; for He ceases not to speak to His sheep ever most clearly and satisfyingly in His Church. If we have been taught in the way of holy Church we have come to know well all the tones of that voice as uttered for us in the pages of the New Testament, where His life and teaching are so exquisitely portrayed. The soul that has once grown familiar with the Lord's voice, as so brought home to human hearts, fails not to recognize it in all utterances of holy Church. The creeds—what are they but the summing up of the wonderful truths which He revealed to His chosen ones concerning the Godhead, and

His Incarnate life: whenever we recite them we hear His voice and know it. The psalms day by day, the sacred seasons of the ecclesiastical year, as they pass one by one, fail not to echo His voice to His faithful sheep.

In like manner the worship of the sanctuary, the holy Mass, the ministrations of the clergy, the using of the sacraments, all these perpetuate the tones of His unearthly teaching, and give to His sheep unfailing assurance that He ceases not to guide them.

Third Thought.—Very significantly the Master adds concerning His sheep; "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." There can be but one truth even as there is but one Lord, therefore every stranger must be an enemy. In these days men are ever persuading us that new doctrines and new systems ought to be patiently investigated, even though they set aside the old Gospel. We are told that there may be a great deal of truth in them, and that we should keep ever open minds, ready to receive everything that is good. Why should Christ's sheep flee from strangers? Just because their voice is not the voice of the Good Shepherd. There can be no truth other than that He has revealed. We should simply test

all new doctrines, all new systems claiming the truth, by the standards of the old Catholic religion. In so far as they conform to those they are sound, in so far as they differ they are false. In the divine religion the strange voice is ever the voice of the foe.

LXXXIV.

"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture."
—St. John x. 7, 8.

Exposition.—St. Augustine comments as follows: "Before His advent the Prophets came: what, were they thieves and robbers? God forbid! They came not beside or apart from Him, for they came with Him. Himself about to come, He sent heralds; but they whom He sent were men whose hearts He Himself possessed. . . . The times were diverse, yet to both there was and is one door of faith, and through it, that is, through Christ, they both did come in. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin, is come in the flesh, hath suffered, hath risen again, hath ascended into heaven. . . . In the fellowship of that faith are with us those fathers also who believed that He would be born of a virgin, would suffer, would rise

again, would ascend into heaven. . . . Well then, did they not believe the same things which we believe were prophetically foretold? Of course they believed: only, they believed that the things were to come; we, that they are come. Accordingly he also saith thus: *They drank the same spiritual drink*: spiritually the same, because bodily not the same. For what was it they drank? *They drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them; and that Rock was Christ.* The signs varied while the faith is the same. There the Rock was Christ. To us that is Christ which is placed on the altar of God. And they, as a great sacrament of the same Christ, drank water flowing from the rock; we drink, the faithful know what. If thou look at the visible form, the thing is another: if at the intelligible signification, they drank the same spiritual drink. Therefore as many as in those times believed either Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, or Moses, or the other Patriarchs and Prophets foretelling Christ, were sheep, and heard Christ; it was not the voice of strangers, but His own voice that they heard."

The Bible Commentary says: "They who came, who pretended to satisfy the national expectation inspired by the prophets, or to mould the national expectations after the Pharisaic type, who offered in any way that which was

to be accepted as the end of the earlier dispensation, who made themselves doors of approach to God, were essentially and continued to be inspired by selfishness, whether their designs were manifested by craft or by violence, and whether they were directed to gain or to dominion. They were thieves and robbers. With them John the Baptist may be contrasted. He claimed only to prepare the way for One coming."

Of the going in and out and finding pasture, St. Augustine says: "We go in when we inwardly think some thought; and go out when we outwardly work some work: and as the Apostle saith, Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith, so that to go in through Christ is to think according to the faith; and to go out through Christ is to work by faith abroad also, that is, in the sight of men. But it delighteth me rather to take it according to that He saith, *I am come that they might have life*, that is, faith which worketh by love, by which faith they enter into the fold that they may live, for the just doth live by faith; *and may have it more abundantly* also, by persevering unto the end, go out by that door, that is, by the faith of Christ, seeing they die true believers; and shall have life more abundantly, by coming to that place whither that Shepherd is gone be-

fore, where they shall never thenceforth die. Albeit then here also, in the fold itself, there lacks not pasture, since we may understand that which is said *shall find pasture* of both, that is, both at the coming in and at the going out; yet there they shall find true pasture, where they shall be satisfied, who hunger and thirst after righteousness: such pasture as he found to whom it was said, *To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*"

The Bible Commentary on the same sums up thus: "The fulness of the Christian life is exhibited in its three elements—safety, liberty, support. Admission to the fold brings with it first security, *he shall be saved*. But this security is not gained by isolation. The believer *goes in and out* without endangering his position. . . . And while he does so *he finds pasture*; he is able to convert to the divinest use all the fruits of the earth."

First Thought.—One cannot but observe the way in which our Lord asserts His absolute supremacy and His unique place as the Saviour of the world. All who ever claimed to be such before Him were but thieves and robbers to whom the true sheep of God would not hearken. He admits no goodness of any kind in systems which are in conflict with His. It is important

that we remember this in our day, wherein we find all manner of human theories and religions, which zealous and often well-meaning people have put forth as substitutes for the old Gospel. Christ's religion is the religion of the Catholic Church. All other types of Christianity are of human origin, and hostile to the true religion when they disregard any of its important features. We ought never to look with leniency upon these systems, as if they were much better than no religion at all, or that they are calculated to help some people, to reach souls which the Church cannot or does not reach. We are taught that such forms of Christianity are in spiritual matters but as the associations of thieves and robbers are in the life of the world. If the men who maintain and propagate them realized what they are doing, and how repugnant to the truth their teachings really are, they would be God's enemies. We ought to be most lenient toward those who err through ignorance, but we may never be patient of false systems which set at nought the ways of the Church.

Second Thought.—The divine Master goes on to say that if any one enter in by the Door, which is Himself, he shall be saved; implying that there is no salvation save through en-

trance by the Door. It is another illustration of the same exclusiveness of His religion as that which declares that all other teachers who claim to be saviours of men are but thieves and robbers. We like to maintain our favourite theory of liberality in religion, as we call it; that everybody will be saved who does what he thinks to be right. Our Lord admits no such principle. There is no salvation save through loyalty to Him, He is the only Door. Of this two things are to be said.

1. First that by salvation is here to be understood that blessed condition of the saints in heaven, which is the outcome of the complete conquest of sin in their lives, and their entire incorporation into Christ. Such blessed souls behold the Beatific Vision, the face of God unveiled, and gaze on it with rapture in all eternity. There has been revealed no road to the attainment of such beatitude save that of the sacramental life; no man can come to the Father but by Christ.

2. It is also true that God requires of no man more than he is able to do, therefore He must surely judge all those to whom the knowledge of His religion has not been vouchsafed according to some lower standard than that of its obligations. Every man will be held answer-

able according to the degree of light given him, and there is no reason to fear that any who honestly does his best according to the light vouchsafed him will suffer eternal loss. But those who have the opportunity of accepting Christ's religion and refuse it, can have no ground for hoping that upright moral living will save them from hell, much less win them heaven. All who know the Catholic religion must loyally live it if they would find entrance at last into the presence of God.

Third Thought.—The Master's beautiful saying concerning His sheep, that they shall go in and out and find pasture, may be taken in several ways.

1. The faithful "go in" by prayer and the various exercises of devotion; they "go out" when they are occupied in the duties of this present life. But the right-minded Christian serves God not less truly when at his world-work than when at his prayers; he finds pasture, that is, spiritual nourishing and refreshment in all that he does, forasmuch as he does all to the glory of God.

2. It is also true that in the active religion of good works we find true pasture just as much as in meditation and worship; in the one case we "go out," in the other we "go in."

3. The most perfect sense of all is that which takes the "going in" of the devout life in this world, and the "going out" of the passing of the soul into the world of spirits at death. The sacraments of the Church afford us here no mean pasturage, we eat Christ's Flesh, we drink His Blood. In purgatory we know not in what way the faithful are nourished, yet certainly they are being built up ever more and more in Christ. In heaven the Lamb Himself is their Shepherd and feeds them in green pastures beside the still waters.

LXXXV.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."—St. John x. 10, 11.

Exposition.—Theophylact says: "Mystically, the thief is the devil, who steals by wicked thoughts, kills by the assent of the mind to them, and destroys by acts."

St. Gregory says: "He adds what the goodness of the Shepherd is for our imitation: *The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.* He did what He bade, He set the example of what He commanded: He laid down His life for the sheep, that He might convert His Body and Blood in our sacrament, and feed with His Flesh the sheep He had redeemed."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "*The Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep.* Such is His characteristic sign, so that in the Revelation it is the Lamb Himself Which was slain Which as a Shepherd leadeth the

sheep. And in connection with His death St. Paul speaks, *The God of peace That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.* The good Shepherd even in the highest sense, in which there is none good but One, that is, God. He layeth down His life for the sheep as no one else can, for it is by His own death to redeem them. And, again, others lay down their lives for the sheep; but, Augustine adds, not without Him, as He does without them; *For without me, ye can do nothing.* And further, the martyrs die to gain crowns, but Christ only to confer them. He is offering up His life for them even now, in watching, in dangers, in teaching; as being about to do so more fully on the cross. And hence this similitude has become the test of every good shepherd, that he is willing, as St. Paul, *to spend and be spent for his flock.* And it is remarkable that when the threefold injunction is given to St. Peter of feeding the sheep and lambs of Christ, to this is added the prophetic intimation of His dying for the flock as His Master had done. And it is probable, with allusion to these words that St. John says, *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;* which he proceeds to apply to the giving of alms.

"Every good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep, his property, his kindred, his person; he gives his property in seeking not theirs but them; his kindred, by not preferring them to the good of his flock; and gives up himself, his personal ease, and time, and care. It is the sacrifice of himself for his flock in which the goodness of the shepherd consists; so far only is he a good shepherd as he does in some way or other do this. So far does he resemble the one Good Shepherd of the sheep."

The Bible Commentary speaks thus of the title *good* as our Lord uses it of the shepherd.

"The epithet is remarkable. It recalls the phrases, *the true bread*, and *the true vine*, but it is somewhat different. Christ is not only the *true* Shepherd, Who fulfils the idea of the shepherd, but He is the *good* Shepherd Who fulfils the idea in its attractive loveliness. The epithet implies the correspondence between the nobility of the conception and the beauty of the realization. The good is not only the good inwardly (so the Greek original shows), but good as perceived. In the fulfilment of His work the Good Shepherd claims the admiration of all that is generous in man."

And Sadler likewise: "*The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.* The primary idea, of course, is in defence of the sheep. A

good shepherd, David, risked his life on behalf of his father's flock when he slew the lion and the bear, but the Good Shepherd could not give His life after that fashion. The power of evil could not be overcome by force and adroitness, but by submission to death in the way of atonement. And so the Son of God laid down His life for the sheep as a ransom for them; and so the flock is His own, purchased with His own Blood."

First Thought.—In His own all-wise way our Lord traces for us the gradual course of the downfall of the soul which having at first loyally followed Him, allows itself to be seduced by Satan, and step by step led down into the pit.

1. The thief comes to destroy the sheep; Satan has but one desire concerning the souls of men, that he may bring about their eternal loss in hell. Therefore first he endeavours to steal them, to lure them away from the Good Shepherd and make them his own. He is very crafty and has many subtle ways of approaching the souls of men, being able even to take on him the outward form of an angel of light. But we ought never to forget that since our Lord's descent into hell, when He bound the Evil One for a thousand years, that is, until the last days when Antichrist shall be revealed,

the enemy of souls is not able to deceive any one who is not willing to be deceived by him. Nor with all his might can he force the weakest Christian to sin, if that Christian will but resist him in the power of the divine grace which the sacraments of the Church supply. It is altogether our own fault if our spiritual enemy succeeds in stealing our hearts away from Christ.

2. After he has stolen the faithless sheep, the Evil One works to kill him, that is to keep the soul in mortal sin. He has many ways of effecting this, tempting his victims with all manner of allurements, appealing to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eyes, to the pride of life, within them, that evil habits may become ingrained; but most of all by persuading the unhappy sinner that true repentance is not required of him, that the sacrament of Penance is too hard for human nature, and quite unnecessary. Soon the conscience becomes seared, and soul-mortification sets in. Happily so long as this life lasts the sinner may break away, and return by genuine repentance to the Good Shepherd, but too many of Satan's victims lose all desire of escaping from him.

3. There is but one possible ending for the dead soul, if it be not revived by repentance and the grace of God before its passing into

the other world. The Evil One has power to destroy all who die impenitent, and he avails himself of his opportunities to the uttermost. There is no salvation after death, there is no hope for those who having once belonged to Christ as His sheep, have lapsed, and ended their earthly days dead in trespasses and sins; only the endless destruction of hell fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels" awaits them.

Second Thought.—Nothing is more inevitable than the gradual disillusioning of the soul concerning the things of this world. Youth is full of dreams, of high ambitions; and in many cases the conditions of living are easy and pleasant. For some a longer time is necessary than for others to make them realize that the existence we know here is but a mockery of life; nevertheless the knowledge must come to all sooner or later. Everything is stamped with death. The individual may triumph for awhile over all opposing circumstances, may stand firm while his neighbours fall all about him, but it is only a matter of a few years for any one; then life succumbs to death. Nevertheless there is a true life over which death has no power. The Master declares, "I am come that they might have life." And the believer who faith-

fully avails himself of sacramental grace learns with amazement and delight how true a life that is. There is nothing to be compared with the consciousness, which comes to the soul as the joys of the present world one by one slip away from it, that there is a true existence of great and perfect and satisfying things, an existence in which the servant of Christ has share, and the realization of an ever-increasing share. It is even as if the voyagers on some great ship, long fog-bound and far out of their way, drifting helplessly, were to find themselves all at once in touch by wireless telegraphy with a coast they were fast approaching, and should continue to receive ever more and clearer word of it. No bereavements, no troubles of this present world, seem of great consequence when the soul grasps the fact that it is in very truth in touch with the fatherland. It knows too that death, which so many dread as the melancholy summons to their judgment, can mean for the faithful only that which the Lord promises, that they shall have life abundantly; that is, with God and unendingly.

Third Thought.—The secret of that life and of its power He tells us also; it is the gift of the Good Shepherd: He giveth His life for the sheep. For even as there was in that life

which He had made His own the marvellous quality of being able to renew itself in resurrection, after going down to an apparent end in death; so also does it belong to it to quicken all human lives which shall be brought into union with it, that they too may have power of resurrection. We are not to forget the infinitely touching part of it, that He had to endure death in the awful form of the cross, in order to bestow upon us the gift of life. Nor ought we to forget the further most amazing and most gracious fact that He has His own ineffable way of giving His life day by day for His sheep, spreading His board in His Church with His very Flesh and Blood, that we may eat and drink and live. How then can any who refuse, or who neglect this sacrament, hope to attain eternal life!

LXXXVI.

"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep."—St. John x. 12, 13.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Four are there on the side of good, the Door, the Porter, the Shepherd, and the Sheep; and in all these may be various manifestations of Christ; the Door, as affording the sole admission to the Father; the Porter as bearing the keys of David, the keys of death and of hell; the Shepherd as the guide and guardian of the sheep; and Himself the sheep also, as being made one with them, in order that He might be a sacrifice for them. Again, four are there on the side of evil, the thieves, and the robbers; both such as enter not by the door, but prey upon the flock, whether Pharisees, infidels, or heretics; the mercenary, who though he may enter by the door, is of those who *seek their own, not things which are Jesus Christ's*; and the wolf, which

is the enemy of the sheep, under whatsoever form he may assume. He who feedeth the Lord's flock for the sake of temporal hire, and not for love, is an hireling not a shepherd. He who loveth temporal substance more than he loveth the sheep. He seeth evil approaching, and taketh care of himself, not of them. *Seeth the wolf coming*, that is, says Ludolphus, 'the devil to seize, the heretic to deceive, or the tyrant with bodily inflictions.' When the wolf cometh is the trial, for, as St. Gregory says, 'whether a man be a shepherd or an hireling cannot be told for certain, except in time of trial. In tranquil times the hireling generally stands on watch like the shepherd.' He flees, as St. Gregory and St. Augustine explain it, not by change of place, but by shrinking from duty. When the devil would tempt any of his flock, a pastor can rarely interfere for their protection without danger to himself; such interference or not marks the true or mercenary pastor. But St. Augustine well observes that many hirelings, or such as seek temporal advantages in the Church, preach Christ, and through them Christ's voice is heard; the sheep follow not the hireling, but the voice of the Shepherd, heard through the hireling. The mercenary may sit in Moses' seat, and therefore the flock obey him, but in doing so it is not him, but Jesus Christ

in him Whom they follow. In this there is much consolation."

St. Augustine's words are: "Who is the hireling that seeth the wolf coming and fleeth? The man who seeks his own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's, that man does not frankly reprove him that sinneth. Lo, some man hath sinned, hath grievously sinned; he must be rebuked, be excommunicated: yea, but excommunicated, he will be an enemy, will plot, will do a mischief when he can. Now the man that seeks his own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's, this man that he may not lose that which he follows after, to wit, the advantage of men's friendship, and incur the annoyance of men's enmity, holds his peace, does not rebuke. Lo, the wolf is gripping the sheep by the throat: the devil hath seduced a believer into adultery; thou holdest thy peace, rebukest not: O hireling, thou sawest the wolf coming, and fleddest! Perchance he answers, and says: Lo, here I am; I have not fled. Thou hast fled, because thou hast held thy peace; thou didst hold thy peace, because thou wast afraid. Fear is the flight of the mind. In body, thou stoodest; in spirit, thou fleddest."

Sadler quotes Wesley as follows: "It is not the bare receiving hire which denominates a man an hireling, for the labourer is worthy of

his hire, and the Lord hath ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. But the loving hire, the loving the hire more than the work, the working for the sake of the hire. He is an hireling who would not work were it not for the hire."

First Thought.—No character could be much more base than that of the priest who executes his sacred function just for the sake of the worldly maintenance which he derives from it; who is concerned to do only such work as shall qualify him to draw his stipend in his present cure, and further his advancement in the future to some more lucrative one. Such a shepherd will be no defence to the flock in the day of peril, but will surely leave it to its fate and seek his own safety.

It is not applicable only to priests however, for the kingdom of Christ has been so constituted by our divine Master that none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Every layman shares to some degree the responsibility of the shepherd, and may be guilty of the misconduct of the hireling. Men and women in the Church are often wont to look upon their Christian profession from a mercenary point of view. They feel the obligation to serve Christ; they fear hell, and are greatly

desirous of winning heaven—nevertheless they do not want to incur responsibility for anything but their own salvation. They would like to ignore their fellow-Christians entirely; they say, Let them look out for their own spiritual welfare, even as I do for mine. But our Lord will not have it so in His Church. Therein every one is, in some measure at least, his brother's keeper. Those who would escape their responsibility for helpfulness in the company of the faithful are as the hireling shepherd. They see the wolf coming; perhaps a demand made upon them to bear shame and contempt, the world's scorn or hatred, for the sake of the Master's religion. Every one can do something to uphold the faith, to strengthen the weak in the day of assault upon the Church, to help those who are ready to do battle as good shepherds in Christ's name. It is easier to leave the sheep and to flee; to keep on the popular side. Perhaps the wolf is seen approaching in the form of a demand upon one for personal sacrifice, for hardness and self-denial. The Catholic religion alluring by its attractiveness at first, is after a while perceived to require a rigour of living, and a strictness of devout practice which the disciple is not prepared to render. He is not willing to be faithful to the precepts of Christ at any cost, he would but selfishly sat-

isfy the religious cravings of his own soul at as little demand upon his ease as possible. He is an hireling, he leaves Christ's true flock, quite unconcerned as to its fate, and flees to find security and comfort for himself elsewhere.

Second Thought.—Our Lord's teaching concerning our responsibility as individuals for the well-being of His Church, as if we were all of us in some sense shepherds as well as sheep, is very solemn. When He tells us that because of the flight of the hireling the wolf is enabled to catch the sheep and to scatter them, He surely means that the hireling will be held answerable for the damage which ensues. It is most true that no one escapes responsibility on his own life, that no one shall be held guiltless in the last day on the plea that others failed to teach him aught, or actually led him into sin. That plea does not free his soul, but if true it makes his fellows, who should have furthered his salvation, sharers in his condemnation. The Good Shepherd is always able to save His sheep from the jaws of the wolf despite the faithlessness of hireling shepherds, nevertheless those unworthy shepherds are quite as guilty in His eyes as if His sheep had been torn. It is probable that the most grievous punishments of hell are those which must be endured by souls

which in this world failed to do their part to promote the safety and welfare of Christ's flock.

He adds that the wolf finding the sheep defenceless scatters them. It is a reminder to us how grievous in the Lord's eyes is disunion in His Church, a scattered flock. The most fertile cause of Christendom's divisions is the self-seeking of individual believers; they are willing neither to live according to the exacting standards of the Catholic system, nor its requirement of personal self-surrender. We cannot better promote the cause of reunion than by tenacious loyalty to the old ways of the Church, and by lives of genuine self-denial.

Third Thought.—The secret of the utter failure of the hireling in the hour of danger is that "he careth not for the sheep." Too often this is one of the most crying sins of our lives. We are selfish; we care very much for those who are near and dear to us, but we do not care for Christ's sheep as such. If we cared we should have our neighbour's lives very much more in our prayers; we should be constantly interceding with God for those whom we know to be in affliction, those whom we know to be in sin, or in grievous temptation which is likely to end in sin. We should be very zealous of works of mercy, that the Gospel may be spread abroad,

that it may be preached to the poor. It ought to startle us to think how little we care about the welfare of our fellows generally. That is the mark of the hireling.

On the other hand how good it is to remember that our Lord cares for His sheep, and with an affection surpassing all human comprehension. For it could not have been because we were naturally near of kin to Him, or His dear friends, that He gave His life upon the cross for us. When we remember how greatly He cares we can never despair, nor be hopelessly discouraged. There is always hope if we but repent and amend our ways, for He cannot desert His sheep.

LXXXVII.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."—St. John x. 14, 15.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Even among that crowd that surrounded Him were such in secret known to Him. He first knoweth His sheep, and then He is known of them. This knowledge is of intimate union, for they dwell in Him, and He in them; and connected with incomprehensible mystery, for it is, He adds, *as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father*, Christ's knowledge of His sheep, and their knowledge of Him, is as the Father's knowledge of the Son, and His knowledge of the Father. This explanation, indeed, is not according to the usual punctuation, which keeps the latter declaration as a clause distinct in itself, and not as connected with the former. But this rendering as here given St. Cyril supports; and thus in other places our Lord speaks of such mysterious semblance in His Church to the highest doctrines of the Blessed Trinity;

thus, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you; and again, That they may be one, as we are one; and, As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*"

Stier comments as follows: "The fundamental idea of the figure has been already brought out, and it is this, the mutual knowledge and the bond of love between the shepherd and his sheep. Thus there is in the distinctive expression *mine*, the first plain indication that there are *false* sheep as there are false shepherds. —The Lord knoweth His own, and even before they know Him, He sees in anticipation their faith, and their following of Himself; and because He does see it He calls them: it follows from His knowing first that it can afterwards be said, *I am known of mine*. The knowing is on His part our acknowledgment and acceptance of His love; on our part the consciousness of being loved, awakening love in return. As the Son of God, which now must be spoken plainly out, He knows and acknowledges His own; for He sees them coming, receives them and loves them as given to Him by the Father, yea, as the sheep of the Father, with Whom He is one."

"It is," says Sadler, "next to His laying down His life for the sheep, the great proof of His

goodness that He knows His sheep, not as a whole, not as a flock, merely, but each one: each soul is precious in His sight, and so He knows the wants of each one. His is not a general superintendence of a vast flock, but a loving and distinguishing regard for each sheep of the flock. . . . His true sheep do not merely know about Him, about His incarnation, His life, works, teaching, sufferings, death, but they know Him as one person knows another. He has called them by name, and they have answered to the call. They have had some tokens, perhaps many, that He recognizes them one by one. They have had some personal experience of His love, compassion, gentleness, or wise and merciful correction. So their knowledge is personal. . . . And this knowledge is the image and reflection of the highest of all mutual knowledge, that of the Father and the Son. It is to be reverently remembered that the Lord, by taking our nature and coming amongst us, became of the flock of God His Father. Knowing perfectly the Father, and being known perfectly of the Father, He submitted to His Father's will and guidance, and put Himself under the care of His Father's providence, so that He knows His Father as His Shepherd, and the Father knows Him as the First of His flock. And He communicates this knowledge to

each true sheep, not, of course to the same degree, for the knowledge of One Another possessed by the Persons of the Trinity is infinite; but it is of the same nature, the *as* signifying likeness, not equality. Our knowledge of Him is the same loving trustfulness and devotion to His will as He has to His Father's will. And He looks upon us with the same guiding, fostering love, as His Father, in His state of humiliation, looked upon Him. . . . *And I lay down my life for the sheep.* This is not a mere repetition, but follows upon His declaration of His knowledge of the sheep. He knows them, He knows their needs, He knows their danger from the enemy, He knows too what capacities there are in them for serving God and returning His own and His Father's love; and so because of this knowledge He lays down His life for them, that His infinite grace may reach them and perfect them."

First Thought.—There is a mystery and a depth of meaning in our Lord's words in this passage which we can never hope to fathom while we are here below. He tells us that He knows His sheep even as the Father knows Him. The Father delighted in the loveliness and perfection of that human nature which our Lord assumed. Yet in assuming it the grac-

ious Master was pleased to take on Him all the iniquity of human sin, and its liability to punishment. He came to be our Redeemer, and so He had to stand in the sight of the All-holy Father bearing the hateful and loathsome burden of a world's sin. How great then must have been the love of the Father for the Son when He beheld this amazing sacrifice of His love, that for poor humanity's sake He would thus weigh down His pure flesh and spotless soul with a guiltiness which compelled the Bloody Sweat and the cry of anguish upon the cross, Why hast Thou forsaken me? It was thus that the Father knew the Son in the Son's abasement of Himself to our forlorn estate.

And He says that it is after the same sort that He knows His sheep, that is, He knows us as our lives tell the story of our battle with sin. We cannot be innocent as He was in His humanity, yet if by genuine loyalty we are truly united to Him, the excellence of His innocency is transferred to us, and we become very lovely in His sight, because we have by our own will laid hold upon and appropriated His righteousness. Nothing can give our Lord so great delight as to have His faithful ones avail themselves of that redemption which He wrought for them. He knows us therefore in all the daily struggle

with besetting temptation, in all the heart-grief of our contrition after our falls, in the shame of our confessions, the humble gratitude which fills our hearts when we receive absolution. He knows the yearning of our prayer-times, He knows the rapture of our communions, the ecstasy of our moments of successful meditation. If this sort of life be not ours in reality He knows that also, and He acknowledges us not as His own; but if it be, in spite of all our failures, how great joy does the Good Shepherd find in His knowledge of His sheep!

Second Thought.—The Master goes on to say that even as the Father is known by the Son, so His sheep know Him, their Good Shepherd. The same profound mystery enshrouds the fulness of His meaning here; nevertheless it is not impossible for us to grasp a portion of it. The Son perfectly reading the Father's heart comprehends the depth of its love for human creatures, making so amazing an effort to redeem them even at the cost of the life-blood of the Only-begotten. Knowing absolutely the unutterable greatness, and wisdom, and holiness of the Father, He beholds love dominating His every other attribute, yet without the surrender of immutable justice.

So the Lord's true sheep know Him in His

wealth of love for them. They do not lose sight of His majesty and infinite holiness; they delight to render Him lowliest worship in His Church; yet their supreme thought concerning Him is ever that of His tireless readiness to forgive, His love of penitents. If we be truly His we have found out the wealth of His compassion, and have learned to go freely to Him in our unhappy falls. Only let us not forget that He is still too holy to put away the sins of those who do not genuinely repent. We can know all His love, if we be penitents; otherwise we are none of His.

Third Thought.—The Master adds in His own simple fashion, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” This must be because to lay down one’s life for the beloved is the triumph of love, and He could not do less. It means too that we should love Him so ardently as to be ready to lay down our lives for Him. There is in heaven a noble army of martyrs, to whom He granted this very vocation. There may be martyrdom in our every day experience not less acceptable in His sight.

1. There is a true laying down of one’s life in the willing surrender of cherished ambitions at His behest; accepting it quite contentedly

when one finds he may not have any of those things his heart most desires.

2. It is harder perhaps to lay down one's life for Christ by patient endurance of long years of grievous pain and malady, being content to suffer all one's days without repining, and making one's pain an offering of love to Him.

3. Hardest of all is it to lay down one's life for the Master in the steadfast ceaseless struggle with besetting temptation; never relaxing one's vigilance, never giving up one's rules of self-discipline, systematically bringing one's tale of shame into the confessional, perhaps conquering finally only in the hour of death.

LXXXVIII.

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."—St. John x. 16.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "What meaneth then, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel?* It meaneth this, that His bodily presence He exhibited not but unto the people of Israel. To the Gentiles He went not in His own person, but sent: to the people of Israel He both sent and came in His own person; that they which despised might receive greater judgment, because His very presence was exhibited to them. The Lord Himself was there, there chose He a mother; there He willed to be conceived, there to be born, there to shed His blood; there are the prints of His footsteps, they are even now adored, where He last stood, whence He ascended into heaven: but to the Gentiles He sent. But haply some man deems, because He came not personally to us, but sent to us, that we have not heard His voice, but only the voice of

them whom He sent. God forbid! be that thought driven from your hearts: in these whom He sent, Himself was also present. . . . Hear what He saith: *Other sheep I have*, that is, in the Gentiles: *which are not of this fold*, that is, of the people of Israel; *them also not of this fold*, that is, of the people of Israel; *them also must I bring*. Therefore by the ministry of His servants it is none other than He That bringeth. Hear further: *They shall hear my voice*. Lo, by the ministry of His servants it is He that speaketh, and through them whom He sendeth, His voice is heard."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "*Other sheep I have which are not of this fold*; and though now at first sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet them also must I bring. *For the Lord God Which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him*. And to this St. Peter bears witness, writing to the Gentiles, *Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*. So he adds: *There shall be one fold and one shepherd*; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision; but Christ is all and in all. One fold, one Shepherd, all is union, all

tends to the unity of God, to the Three Persons in One God."

Sadler says: "The other sheep are the Gentiles which were to believe in Him through the preaching of His word. Notice that even now they are His though they know it not: *Other sheep I have* He adds, *Which are not of this fold*, does the Lord mean that there was a heathen fold or folds? Impossible. A fold is that into which sheep are gathered, and in which they are surrounded with outward and visible means of protection. No doubt Christ kept by His own power all those among the heathen whom He designed ultimately to hear His voice, and become of His true flock, but He kept them by other means than those by which He kept the Jewish flock which He hedged round. *Them also I must bring*, that is, into the true fold or rather flock, by the preaching of the Gospel. . . . *There shall be one fold and one shepherd*. By saying that there is to be but one flock our Lord means to assert that there shall be but one Catholic Church, not one Jewish and one Gentile fold, but one Body of Christ, one organization for the preservation of the truth, and for the perfecting of the saints. This was the Lord's intention; how far His intention has been frustrated by the wilfulness and perverseness of

men, we cannot now determine; suffice it to say that it is impossible that He could have contemplated an unlimited number of separate visible organizations, each founded on its own peculiar view of the truth."

The Bible Commentary, accenting the fact that our English translation misrepresents the Lord's actual words, in reading *one fold, one Shepherd*, when it is literally one flock, one shepherd, says, "The change in the original from fold to flock is most striking, and reveals a new thought as to the future relations of Jew and Gentile. . . . the bond of fellowship is shown to lie in the common relation to one Lord."

First Thought.—Our Lord in this verse strikes for us the note of His personal interest in and care for His people. He has not abdicated His shepherd's office because of His ascension. His sheep among all the children of men are known to Him every one; He cannot miss or overlook any. The Father hath given Him all souls which shall come to Him at the last, and He foreknows them every one before they are brought into the world. As in the Apostolic days there were many of His sheep among the Gentiles, not of the Jewish fold, so in these days there are doubtless numbers of

His sheep outside the fold of the Catholic Church. He has indeed revealed no way of salvation save through the Church, therefore it is ever our duty to strive to bring all men into the Church. We need not be discouraged however at the small apparent results of the Church's missionary efforts save as they manifest our own apathy in the Master's cause. He does not permit His true sheep anywhere to suffer soul-loss because the human teacher fails to reach them. He can easily bring them Himself to the fold, in His own fashion, in countless ways of which we have no knowledge. Our anxiety concerning missions should not be because the heathen are not reached, but because of our own lack of zeal in seeking to reach them. It is we who are in peril of loss through the inadequacy of missionary effort, not the folk to whom the missionary ought to be sent, and is not. Our Lord fails not to do His own mission work; He is quite independent of us in His care for His sheep, but that will not help us in the day of judgment.

It is natural for us to feel sad when we think of the number of friends, relations perhaps, which we have who are outside the fold of the Catholic Church, and give no sign of any desire to enter it. Many who are very dear to us

have died, it may be, outside the communion of the Church. We need not be disquieted because of that however, for all who are Christ's true sheep He will bring, and they shall hear His voice. We must trust Him to do what we cannot do, not indeed thinking and speaking as if it were a matter of small consequence whether men obeyed the Lord in His Church or not, but realizing that He is not limited as we are, and has His own way of bringing into that Church all who are in truth His sheep.

Second Thought.—Again He accents for us the note of His personal relationship to His sheep by saying, "There shall be one flock." No one can read the New Testament candidly and fancy our Lord to be indifferent in the matter of the unity of His Church. He prayed that they all might be one, He insists that all shall be one eventually, He declares that in a very real sense all who are truly His are one, they cannot but be one, for unity is of the necessary marks of His Church. What then constitutes that unity? Its ultimate basis is the communion of every one of the members with their Head; the flock is one because all the sheep have one Shepherd. That thought may console us when we lament the broken outward unity of the earthly body of the Church. If each

part remain true to those divine principles on which Christ builded His religion, the faith which He revealed, the ministry which He ordained, the sacraments which He instituted, and the worship which He bade men offer as a memorial of Himself, the essential union of all the parts is maintained with the Head, and, through the Head, of one part with another. And every believer may satisfy himself that he is within the one flock if he continue stedfast in any Communion which maintains the Nicene faith, the Apostolic ministry, the Catholic sacraments, and the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Third Thought.—The Master reminds us yet further of the continuance of His personal relationship to His Church by saying that there shall be one Shepherd over His flock. That can be no other than Himself. Yet we are not to forget that the way in which He is pleased to shepherd His sheep while they are here in the world, is through His priests. To them He said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." To them He said, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." Men have sometimes fancied that they could come to Christ more directly by ignoring the ministry which He has set up than through its agency. But not so has He taught

us. His priests have power to baptize in His name, and that which they do, He truly does. They and they only have power to consecrate the bread and wine into His Flesh and Blood, for He acts through them. They and they only are commissioned to say to the penitent confessing his misdeeds, "I absolve thee from all thy sins," for this power the Master is pleased to exercise through them. Through His priesthood He personally shepherds every sheep in His flock. If the priest live an unholy, unchristlike life, he casts away his own soul as he fulfils the part of the shepherd to the sheep; but the sheep suffer no damage because Christ's work cannot be undone by human unfaithfulness save in the life of the faithless individual himself. It is thus that the Master still ministers personally to every sheep in His flock as each one's own Good Shepherd.

LXXXIX.

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."—St. John x. 17, 18.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "What could be more full of humility than this saying, if so be that on our account our Lord shall be beloved, because He dieth for us? What then? tell me, was He not beloved during the time before this; did the Father now begin to love Him, and were we the causes of His love? Seest thou how He useth condescension? But what doth He here desire to prove? Because they said that He was alien from the Father, and a deceiver, and had come to ruin and destroy, He telleth them, This if nothing else would persuade me to love you, namely, your being so beloved by the Father, that I also am beloved of Him, because I die for you."

The Bible Commentary points out that "The

that I may take it again marks a definite purpose, and not merely a result or a condition. The sacrifice is not a casting away of a blessing of God, but is itself made in order to give the blessing fuller reality, and this end is here distinctly set forth. Christ died in order to rise to a completer life and to raise men with Him."

Isaac Williams says: "As ever expressing to the Jews His mission from the Father, and strict union and obedience, and as showing that this oblation of Himself for His sheep is a free and voluntary sacrifice, He adds: *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again.* As the Father hath said of the Son, *In Whom I am well pleased.* Much more in dying the Father loveth Him as seeing in Him the perfection of love and obedience; after the resemblance of which the Father loveth all who will die for others. But in speaking of death, He speaks of His resurrection also, and in this likewise must there be a resemblance in the martyrdom of His saints, who lay down their lives for the brethren, for they do so in full assurance of resurrection. *I lay down my life, that I may take it again* is the essential principle of all martyrdom. And again the perfection of martyrdom is, that it should be voluntary, as He adds in a higher sense, *No man taketh it from me; but I lay it*

down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received from my Father.

“Humiliation and greatness unspeakable constantly expressed at the same time by incidents, or words, or miracles; and now union with the Father is combined with laying down of life; power to lay down and take life is expressed, and at the same time receiving commandment from the Father. As Godhead and Manhood are inseparably united, so is every attribute of both.”

And St. Chrysostom again: “Who hath not power to lay down his life? Since it is in the power of any that will to kill himself. But He saith it not so, but how? I have in such a way the power to lay it down, that no one can effect this against my will. And this is a power not belonging to men, for we have no power to lay it down in any other way but killing ourselves. And if we fall into the hands of men that plot against us, and have the power to kill us, we no longer are free to lay it down or not, but even against our will they take it from us. Now this was not the case with Christ, but even when others plotted against Him, He had power not to lay it down. If this be true, that other point follows, that He can take it again when He will. For if the dying

was a greater thing than man could do, doubt no more about the other. Since the fact that He alone was able to let go His life, sheweth that He was able by the same power to take it again. Seest thou how from the first He proved the second and from His death showed that His resurrection was indisputable."

Of the words, "This commandment have I received of my Father," St. Augustine says: "When the Son is said to receive from the Father that which He substantially hath, as it is said, *As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself*, in this is no lessening of power, but a be-tokening of His generation. For it is not that the Father hath, as unto the Son begotten imperfect, added somewhat, but, to the Son, begotten perfect, hath in begetting given all things. So He gave equality with Himself to Him Whom He begat not unequal."

First Thought.—God expressly declares in Holy Scripture that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Our Lord's death of course was not the death of the wicked, but it was death for the wicked, in their stead; and therefore full of inexpressible sadness, a death of grievous anguish and of inconceivable pain. The Father loved Him with an especial love for

this, yet not merely because He thus bore the penalty of all the sins of humanity with sublime self-sacrifice, but because as the result of His self-sacrifice He restored the free and glorious condition of humanity in His own person, taking again His life out of death's hands, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. Therefore also God delights in the self-sacrificing lives of His people here upon earth, aiding them in their heroic efforts to lay down their lives in pain and trial and unselfish labour for their fellows, not, of course, because He has any pleasure in seeing His creatures suffer, but because the power to take life again grows out of this willing surrender of it, and He above all things delights in the restoration of that glorious humanity which at the first He bestowed upon our race.

It is to be remembered however, that the Father's pleasure in beholding the patience and unselfishness of our lives is not caused merely by our patience under affliction, for that may be mere stoicism; nor by our unselfish spending of our all on behalf of our fellows, for that may be no more than philanthropy on our part. To call forth His joy in us we must have in the laying down of our lives the distinct thought and purpose of working for the restoration of holiness in the world, the accom-

plishing of the divine good-pleasure in our creation. Therefore along with all our patience and self-sacrifice there must go the life of devout prayer and worship, a great desire of God, a true faith in Him, and an ardent longing for the vision of His purpose wholly accomplished. This is the proof that we lay down our lives in order that we may take them again, glorifying Him thereby.

Second Thought.—Our Lord teaches us very wonderfully our power to thus offer up our lives, and to take them again. We seem to be in very small measure indeed the arbiters of our own destiny, often we are ready to fancy ourselves victims of a remorseless fate; we cannot escape the hardness of our lot in the least degree. Nevertheless he who accepts the portion assigned him by God's good providence, not only without murmuring, but with alacrity, recognizing it as a true vocation allotted him, because the very best way in which he can glorify his Maker—this man does interpose his free will, and may say in the Lord's own words of His life, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." Can he add, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again?" Yes, if he be truly following our Lord Christ; not otherwise. Our lives can have

value in heaven's eyes only as they are in union with the life of the Master; that is the secret of their power. We cannot lay too much stress upon the all-importance of the sacramental union of the soul of the believer with Christ, if he is to accomplish anything by self-sacrifice. All the ascetic practices of the religious profit nothing, all the prodigal benevolences of the lover of mankind are valueless, all the patience and trust of the most suffering of earth's children are without efficacy, where there is no faithful effort to live in daily touch with the Master.

Certainly there can be no power to take our lives up again in resurrection, unless we belong to Christ; for we shall all be raised indeed at the last day, but those only are then raised to life who here have received that gift of life from sacramental union with the Giver of life.

Third Thought.—The Master adds significantly, "This commandment have I received of my Father." That is the other side of the same truth and always most important. We are free agents indeed to render loving heart service if we will, but none the less are we under obedience. Our Lord in His perfect humility as man, acknowledged that all things were commanded Him of the Father, in order that the

world's salvation might be accomplished. We are not free agents in any such sense as that we may neglect our vocations and hope to go unpunished. We often need just this stimulus of the sense of our obligations to make us persevere, for love grows faint at times, and hope is dimmed. There is no lack of excellence in doing that which one has to do because of the sense of compulsion, unless that sense of compulsion cause one's obedience to be sluggish and one's work ill-done. That one should do one's very best, with persistent fidelity, is necessary, if he would be accepted on high; but it needs not that we should always feel a great love for our life-work, and a joyousness in doing it. The sense of compulsion may be strong upon us, and the weight of our load seem more than we can bear, nevertheless if there be brave persistence, without complaining, the service is not unacceptable on high; for it is faithfully rendered because of the Father's commandment.

XC.

"Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." St. John x. 24-26.

Exposition. — Isaac Williams says: "This complaint and expression on the part of the Jews seems to imply a painful anxiety to know the truth; it is remarkable as being often the tone of infidels, as if they would embrace the truth, if they could but know it, whereas their not knowing it is their condemnation. He might have replied, says St. Chrysostom, Ye called me one possessed of a devil, and mad, and a Samaritan, and a deceiver; and said but lately, *Thou bearest witness of Thyself, Thy witness is not true*; how then do ye wish to learn of me whose testimony ye reject? 'It was winter,' says Augustine, 'and they were cold; they were slow to approach that divine

fire. To approach is to believe. They were there, yet far away. They wished to hear, I am the Christ, and had some sense of Christ's manhood. The divinity of Christ, both in the prophets and in the Gospel itself, heretics understand not, how much less could the Jews when the veil was on their heart? *Jesus answered them, I told you and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name*—ever expressing with infinite care that He in all His works and words is in no way different from the Father—*these bear witness of me.* As through His natural and moral providences God is daily speaking to us by His works, so in His revelations also: and it is observable that the Jews who now believed did so on account of His works, *No one can do the miracles that Thou doest, unless God be with Him.* He adds: *But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.* Your not receiving me is the proof that ye are not of God. It is not, says St. Chrysostom, because I am not the Shepherd, but because ye are not the sheep. Infidelity is never from want of light from God, but always from an evil heart in man."

St. Augustine comments as follows: "This, as a great matter, the Jews enquired of Christ, in order that if He should say, 'I am Christ,' then, upon the conception which alone they en-

tertained of the Seed of David, they might accuse Him of arrogating to Himself kingly power. What He told them in reply is more than that: they wished to make matter of accusation out of the Son of David: He told them that He was the Son of God. And how? Hear. Jesus answered them, *I tell you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.* Ye have already learned above which are the sheep. Be ye sheep. Sheep are such in believing, sheep in following the Shepherd, sheep in not despising the Redeemer, sheep in entering in by the Door, sheep in going out and finding pasture, sheep in enjoying eternal life. How then said He to these, *Ye are not of my sheep?* Because He saw them predestinated to everlasting destruction, not purchased by the price of His blood unto eternal life."

And St. Chrysostom: "When they could find no fault with His works, they wished to find a handle in His words. Therefore they said, Tell us. But He had often told them. For He said to the woman of Samaria, *I am That speaketh unto thee;* and to the blind man, *Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He That talketh with thee.* And He had told them also, if not in the same at least in other words. And indeed had

they been wise, and had they desired to enquire aright, it remained for them to confess Him by words, since by works He had often proved the point in question. But now observe their perverse and disputatious temper. When He addresseth them, and instructeth them by His words, they say *What sign showest Thou us?* But when He giveth them proof by His works, they say to Him, *Art Thou the Christ? Tell us plainly.* When the works cry aloud, they seek words, and when the words teach, they betake themselves to works, ever setting themselves to the contrary. But that they enquired not for the sake of learning, the end showed. For Him Whom they deemed to be so worthy of credit, as to receive His witness of Himself, when He had spoken a few words they straightway stoned; so that their very surrounding and pressing upon Him was done with ill intent."

First Thought.—Nothing is much more unreal than the constant demand of unbelievers that God should make His truth plainer, if He require them to accept it. They profess that they want to know the truth, that they desire above all things to follow it, but that they must first be convinced. In the great majority of cases it is to be feared that to know the truth is the last thing they want; they are but trying

to make out a good case for their refusal to accept Christ. But those of us who do believe are often not much more genuine, certainly not more reasonable. We do not trust in God, we are perplexed and disturbed by all manner of doubts, just because temporal matters do not go with us as we want them to, and as we are constantly praying that they may go. We insist that temporal good things ought to be our portion, and that of those dear to us, because of our persistent and most heartfelt prayers: yet those good things do not come; therefore we are forced to doubt God's care for us and love of us. We cry to our Lord, "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." And He replies, "I have told you many times, but ye believe not." Has He not always insisted most strongly in Holy Scripture that it is not with our welfare in this present world that He is concerned, but with the salvation of our souls? Has He not always declared most plainly that the way of affliction and hardness, the way of adversity and earthly failure, is the way which leads to heaven? Do we not know Him to have said that chastening is the sign of His favour and of His love for His children? Has He not insisted over and over again that He never will forsake those who trust in Him, that He cannot forget them nor be unmindful of their in-

terests? Has He not declared in express terms that we need never be anxious concerning the temporal things, forasmuch as He makes it His business to provide for our every necessity? The fault is clearly with ourselves, that we will not believe Him. How could He have told us all these things more plainly than He has? If then we doubt and distrust Him, we prove ourselves to be no true disciples, no genuine followers of Him, for we refuse to accept His most plain and unequivocal words repeated many times.

Second Thought.—The Jews of old could perceive that our Lord's gracious works of mercy were of God. When they charged Him with casting out devils through Beelzebub, their charge was atrociously and maliciously wicked; they could not possibly really think that. But they could not begin to understand that which we now know of the Saviour's wonderful works, done in His Father's name. The work of His taking our humanity in order that He might save us; the work of His death upon the cross to put away our sins; the work of His resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His sending down upon His Church the Holy Ghost, His perpetual intercession for us at the right hand of the Father. These works bear such witness of Him that we who know them are utterly in-

excusable if we doubt His love for us, and the power of His grace to save us. Yet it is to be feared that all these amazing works of our Lord in our redemption are but little thought of, little appreciated. We go on talking of the divine indifference to our interests, the divine disregard of our prayers, just as if none of these great things had ever taken place.

Not very different is it with those works of our Lord which encompass us in our daily Christian experience; His provision for our worship of Him in His Church, by means of that divine sacrifice of the altar wherein Calvary is ever commemorated, and its merits applied to us; His most touching gift of absolution, whereby the most grievous sinner if he be but penitent is set free from all the curse of his sin. How much are these works of Christ to us practically? And if they are not much to us, is it wonderful that we do not believe?

Third Thought.—The Master adds very solemnly, “Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.” We all like to think of ourselves as belonging to Christ’s flock. We persuade ourselves that we hear His voice, that we follow Him, that we never could forsake Him for any other shepherd. Yet there is no reason why other sheep than those which are His should

not hear the sound of His voice. The message of His truth is proclaimed in all lands, and millions are well aware of His gracious invitation to come after Him, though they be unwilling to do so because the greatness of the sacrifice involved in so coming. Many persuade themselves that they are following Him because they cordially accept certain features of His doctrine, though they reject others which they do not like. Many persuade themselves that they are His sheep because they cry, "Lord, Lord," professing allegiance though utterly disobedient in life. We must be quite sure that we are in all things striving loyally to do whatsoever He has enjoined in His Church. Obedience is ever the first lesson of the Christian life. When we shall have trained our wills to obey as docile sheep all the precepts of our Shepherd, we shall not find it hard to believe on Him.

XCI.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father Which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."—St. John x. 27-29.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "I admit them into those pastures where herb is ever green and dieth not. They hear His voice by believing; He knoweth them by love; they follow Him by obedience; He giveth them of His own divine life. . . . *My Father Which gave them me is greater than all*; the Father which gave, the Son Which received, therefore distinction; *and no one shall pluck them out of my Father's hand*; the Father's hand is the Son's hand, therefore is there oneness; it is one hand, that is, one power; and if one power, one substance. *I have graven Thee*, says He by His prophet, *on the palms of mine hands*. Safe in His custody *those whom Thou gavest me have I kept*; and here my keeping is Thy keeping;

to be in mine hand is to be in Thine. Great are the powers of evil, of death, and of hell, but God is greater than all; they rage and swell, but the Lord That sitteth on high is mightier. Therefore in Him may be full confidence, of which the Apostle testifies, *Neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.*"

St. Augustine says. "The hand of the Father is not so meant as though God had a human form and members as it were of a body, but, that by the Son were all things made. Thus men used also to call other men their hands, namely, those by whom they do what they will. Sometimes also a man's work is called the man's hand, because made by his hand; as one is said to acknowledge his own hand when he acknowledges what he has written. Since then there are many ways of speaking of the hand even of a man, who hath literally a hand among the members of his body, how much rather is it to be taken not merely in one way when we read of the hand of God, Who hath no form of body? And consequently we do better in this place to understand by the hand of the Father and the Son the power of the Father and the Son, lest haply when we have taken the hand

of the Father here to mean the Son, the carnal thought begin to seek even of the Son Himself a Son, Whom it may in like manner believe to be the hand of Christ. Therefore *no man plucketh out of my Father's hand*, is this, No man plucketh from me."

Sadler comments as follows: "As in all other instances of divine energy, so particularly in that of preserving the true sheep, the Father and the Son work together; so that, *no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand*, corresponds to, *neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*. What is the lesson which the true sheep should learn from this? Not continually to boast of security, but unceasingly to commend themselves to God in such words as, *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord Thou God of Truth*."

And Stier: "It would be sheer perversion to give to the Lord's words a predestinarian force as denying the possibility of falling away. They are secure if, and as long as, they remain His sheep, that is, follow Him, and depend upon Him according to His knowledge of them. If they cast off their dependence upon Him, then, indeed, they perish, but not as His sheep: no enemy, in that case, has plucked them away with mightier power, but they have destroyed

themselves, and suffered themselves to be plucked away. It is a protection of Omnipotence working outwardly from within, which is here asserted; not a guarantee against our own selves. The possibility of backsliding proceeding from ourselves is not excluded by such passages as these; the freedom of man, who may anew engender sin in his own soul, is not taken away in the condition of regeneration."

First Thought.—There is great happiness and peace in dwelling in devout meditation upon the life of the believer as one of our Lord's sheep. Just the hearing His voice gives inexpressible content, as the consciousness is more and more realized that it is His voice, and that one does hear it; that one is being led on all through the devious ways of earthly experience by unfailing wisdom and patient love. It is a thought of great peace too that our Good Shepherd knows us, that He judges not according to the outward life, with all its weaknesses and failures, but reads the heart and cares for the reality and earnestness of loyalty to Himself He finds there. It is a thought of great peace if we be in earnest, if our Christian life within be real; but how utterly disturbing if we are aware that we are not at heart faithful sheep. We cannot be too

greatly concerned to make sure always of our loyalty to Christ. Then His sheep follow Him, and the consciousness that we are following, that He is always ahead of us, is wonderfully inspiring. We are sure that none of the difficulties of life can prove insurmountable, that no evils can overwhelm us, that our sins shall at last be conquered by His grace. But we must not stop at this point in our meditation. His gift to His sheep is that of eternal life. Too often it seems to be true that we get into the way of looking upon our religion as meant only for this world, intended to carry us safely through it, and enable us to play well our several parts, patterning our lives after that of Christ. The all-important thing is that we attain *eternal* life. It is His gift to us at our baptism, and throughout our days here there must be the building up and maturing of that gift. We cannot be Christ's true sheep without being sacrament-using Christians. We do use the sacraments more or less faithfully, we go to Holy Communion with a degree of regularity and carefulness about preparation; some go to confession with very real appreciation of its blessedness, while others use that help but perfunctorily, and a great many use it not at all. But the life of inner union with Christ, of continuance in the state of grace, of increase

in spirituality, is that which the sacraments are meant to nourish, that which only they can sustain, and it is the all-important life. Therefore Christ's true sheep ought to be constantly making examination to see how they are availing themselves of the Good Shepherd's great gift of eternal life.

Second Thought.—Very tenderly and very exultingly does the Lord speak of the way in which He protects His faithful ones. They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand. Did not the martyrs perish when they were burned at the stake; did not the persecutor succeed at least for a little while in plucking them out of the Master's hand? We know very well that the martyrs did not think so, and they could judge better than any other. Their uniform testimony was ever that in the midst of the flames they found the Lord with them, even as the Three Children in the fiery furnace. Nor did they perish even when the fire prevailed against them, for the persecutor never so much as touched their souls. The Good Shepherd bare them away in triumph, into the land of life; the persecutor had but given them release from this troublesome world, and passport into heaven. Did he not at least pluck their bodies

out of the Lord's hand? He could wreak his malice to the uttermost upon the poor charred bones, but the vital being of the body escaped him. It was hidden away in God's secret place, to be brought out again in the resurrection morning, very glorious and beautiful, fit even to be the habitation of the all-holy soul.

Nor does the body of any perish, if he be of Christ's true sheep. We mourn as we lay the flesh of those we love in the grave, feeling how hard it is to part even with the cold clay, though we are well aware that the souls of our dear ones are safe in the Good Shepherd's hand. Our belief in the resurrection assures us that not even the body is lost by death: through dissolution its spiritual essence, the existence of which is God's secret in our lives now, is but set free to gladden our eyes again at the last day with its transformed loveliness.

Third Thought.—Very sublime is the assurance the Master gives His loved ones that no man is able to pluck them out of His Father's hand. It was in that way He made them to understand His divinity, not yet clearly revealed to them. The guarantee which we have that nothing can separate us from our Lord is the fact of His divinity. If He be not divine, His confident assurances here and elsewhere

are vain, however consoling they may sound in our ears. Therefore we cannot too strongly maintain in these days of many varieties of Arian denial, the absolute divinity of our Lord Christ. Not even the arch-enemy Satan can prevail against Him to wreck a single soul. But the other side of the same truth is not less solemn. The sheep has power to leap out of the Shepherd's hand; to spurn His love and goodness, and to fall a prey to the wolf. There is no security in years of loyalty to the Master, if one persevere not to the end. It is easy for devout Christians to grow into the habit of looking forward to heaven as their well-assured destiny, but that is a perilous state of mind. There is no security but the assurance that we suffer ourselves never to remain out of the state of grace; that our sins, so fast as we fall into them, are diligently put away by penitent confession; that our union with Christ is steadfastly maintained by well-made communions, by devout prayer, and the tireless effort to pattern our lives after that of our Master.

XCII.

"I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."—St. John x. 30-33.

Exposition.—Of the words "I and my Father are one," Isaac Williams says: "This is the full confession of Himself, for which they had asked; as the high priest afterwards asks the question, and receives the reply; and it is in both cases unto condemnation; he rent his clothes; these take up stones. Just before they had asked the question, *Art Thou greater than Abraham?* and *Hast Thou seen Abraham?* And received a reply to the same effect. The Jews rightly understood that He spake of Himself as of one Substance with the Father. 'Lo the Jews,' says Augustine, 'understood what the Arians understand not.' 'Those stones,' says Maldonatus, 'cry out against the Arians.'"

St. Augustine says: "Thus far the Jews were able to tolerate: they heard, *I and my Father are one*, and they could not bear it; and as usual, stony-hearted, flew to the stones. The Lord, because it was not for Him to suffer what He was unwilling to suffer, and He did not suffer save what He willed to suffer, still speaks to them while they are desiring to stone Him. *Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.* For that they were wroth, it was because they felt that it could not be said, *I and my Father are one*, unless there is equality of the Father and the Son."

A Lapide quotes the same father thus: "He frees from Charybdis and Scylla; when He says One, from Arius; when He says are, from Sabellius; for *one* signifies the unity of essence, but *are*, the plurality of persons, which Sabellius denied, saying that God was one in person as He was also one in essence."

Sadler comments as follows: "*The Jews took up stones*, rather, *bare stones*, as if they brought them from a distance perhaps, however, owing to the repairs of the temple, loose stones were

at hand. *Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father.* Here is wisdom akin to that He had so often displayed in turning the words of His persecutors against themselves. Instead of asking them why they stoned Him, He asked, For what good works that I have showed you from my Father do ye stone me? He had not said what He had said respecting His omnipotence with the Father without testimony from that Father. He threw them back upon such works as the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, the restoring sight to one born blind, and doubtless, many others; and He disclaimed having done these things apart from His Father. On the contrary, He declares that He had showed them these works from His Father, repeating what He had said before, *The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do."*

Stier says: "The Lord expressly mentions His many works, and vindicates them as purely good works, deeds of benevolence, and proofs of love. I have not merely given to your blind their sight, to your deaf their hearing, to your dumb their voices, I have done all things well. Is it thus that ye thank your physician and benefactor, ye foolish and infatuated people? There is an undeniable tone of irony in this question, especially in the piercing *for which,*

that is, which of my works has been so unhappily performed as to deserve the compensation of stoning? What has been the stamp and character of my acts that, aiming at benevolence, I should find this result? Answer me this. But what lamenting sorrow and entreating humility is at the same time in this irony."

Dods calls attention to the answer of the Jews: "It was blasphemy for a man to claim to be God. And it is noteworthy that Jesus never manifests indignation when charged with making Himself God; yet were He a mere man, no one could view this sin with stronger abhorrence."

First Thought.—The Jews had asked our Lord to tell them plainly whether He were the Christ or not. Apparently He will not do this at the time of their asking, but now He does tell them that, and infinitely more than that, as they understood it, namely, that He is divine, of one substance with the Father. Men who feel great earnestness in the matter of Christ's religion in these days, are wont to deprecate dogmatic statements, and theological subtleties, as they call them. They deem it most unnecessary to insist that everybody shall acknowledge our Lord as divine. They say, So long as men follow His example, and obey His teachings, what does it matter what they believe about His per-

son? Yet this opposition to the careful maintenance of our Lord's divinity as fundamental to the Gospel, is but a subtle trick of Satan to rob men of eternal life. There can be no eternal life for creatures save through their union with God; we must become partakers of the divine nature before we can be sharers in the divine life, and we have no way of reaching God save through our Lord. It is not enough that we cultivate what are called the Christ-like virtues, unselfishness, love, patience, humility, we must likewise acquire sanctity and the knowledge of God. Two things are necessary to any real participation in the divine life.

1. There must be interior purity, the absolute freedom of the soul from every defilement of sin, from every inclination to sin. That is the work of penitence in this world, a life-long work always, and in most cases only to be completed in purgatory.

2. There must be the building up of the soul in supernatural gifts and graces, such as shall render it meet for entrance into the celestial company. This is that wedding garment required of the Great King.

We cannot acquire these necessary things for eternal life through any cultivation of what are called the Christ-like virtues alone. They are most necessary, but they are only one part of

the soul's preparation for immortality. Only devout effort more and more to purge ourselves from every suspicion of sin; only devout effort to build up our inner selves in holiness through sacramental grace, can bring us to our celestial destiny. If our Lord be not God He cannot save us; He can teach us indeed to lead edifying earthly lives, but He cannot raise us to immortality.

Second Thought.—Who could begin to enumerate the good works which our Lord wrought in the days of His earthly ministry; works of healing, works of encouragement and help, freeing unhappy ones from the dominion of devils who had possessed them, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead to life again. St. John does not exaggerate when he tells us at the end of his Gospel, that if all our Lord's works were to be written down, the world could not contain, so he supposes, the books recording them. But what are all those temporal works of mercy, done by Him long ago, in comparison with the spiritual works of mercy wrought by the Master on our behalf? What are we to say, first of all, concerning His supreme gift of redemption by the cross? Shall any be found to stone Him for that? Aye, even that, the cross of love, has been an object of hatred and furious persecution at the hands of men. There is the

work of regeneration whereby we are made very members of Himself. There is the unspeakably amazing gift of the Eucharist, wherein He makes His faithful ones to eat and to drink of His very substance. And then that most precious gift of His free pardon from the guilt of their sins, vouchsafed to all who seek it in Penance. Truly He has showed us many good works from His Father, supernatural works, works worthy of God's own intervention to effect them. Yet every one of these has been most vehemently assailed by objectors. We may tolerate them perhaps, but how much do we care about them? Very little indeed in most cases, it is to be feared, and when we speak about them, it is too often only to find fault in some way, and to criticize them.

Third Thought.—When pressed by Him to give answer for which it is of His works from heaven that we stone Him, we are fain to reply that it is in no sense because of any of His gracious interventions on our behalf we find fault with the system of the Church: it is because He through the Church insists upon a loyalty on our part more strict than we are pleased to give. The sacramental gifts we are very thankful for, but we cannot endure the humbling precepts of the Gospel, the precepts of personal meekness, of non-resistance, of self-

forgetfulness. We cannot endure the Gospel precepts of personal hardness, of fasting, self-denial, the giving up of all manner of pleasant things in order that He may lay His cross upon us. We cannot accept the principle of unworldliness, that we are not to seek after wealth, nor even desire it; because it is a snare to men's souls, blinding their eyes to the true riches which Christ offers them. He makes obedience to Himself of more importance than our comfort and well-being in this present world; and the natural man resents this, even to the taking up of the stones of rejection. We demand a Saviour Who is to be ever at our beck and call in prayer, to minister to us here as *we* would in temporal blessings, hereafter to assure us everlasting blessedness. The right to demand of us love, obedience, worship and self-denial, is more than we are willing to accord Him.

XCIH.

"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"—St. John x. 34-36.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "If the children of adoption may be so called, may not He Who is by nature the Son of God? But this is rather the latent than the expressed meaning; for it is spoken in condescension to their weak faith, as Origen, St. Augustine, and Chrysostom consider it. Yet although thus spoken in humility, it does not at all the less on that account contain within it the inscrutable mysteries of godliness. As Quesnel says: "Though every priest be admitted to a participation of the mission of Jesus Christ, yet there still exists an infinite difference between one who is only consecrated and sanctified by the external Word of God, and Him Who is Himself the consubstantial and eternal Word of the

Father, Who does not sanctify Him by anything external or created, but by Himself"; Who begat Him in the fulness of His own holiness: Who consecrated His manhood by the Godhead: Who ordained Him High Priest: Who appointed Him as the only Sacrifice for sin: Who bore witness to His holiness by miracles."

St Chrysostom comments as follows: "What He saith is of this kind: If those who have received this honour by grace, are not found fault with for calling themselves gods, how can He Who hath this by nature deserve to be rebuked? Yet He spake not so, but proved it at a later time, having first relaxed and yielded somewhat in His discourse, and said, *Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent*. And when He had softened their anger, He bringeth forward the plain assertion. For a while, that His speech might be received, He spoke in a humbler strain, but afterwards He raised it higher."

And St. Augustine, on the words, "Whom the Father hath sanctified": "The Father then sanctified His own Son, and sent Him into the world. Perhaps some one may say, If the Father sanctified, that is, made Him holy, was there then a time when He was not holy? So sanctified, as He begat. For by begetting He gave to Him that He should be holy, because He begat Him holy. If because a thing is sanc-

tified it follows that it was not holy before, in what sense may we say to God the Father, *Hallowed* (or sanctified) *be Thy Name?*"

Sadler says: "In order to see somewhat of the wisdom of this answer, it is to be remembered that the term God, as here used, is not the incommunicable name of the Supreme Being, Jehovah. The term God, in the Hebrew, signifies the powerful one or ones, and so early as in the third chapter of Genesis, it is given to those beings who were in power greater than men. *Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* It seems given, in the Old Testament, to all supernatural beings, reserving, of course, its full application to the One Supreme Jehovah. In this sense it seems to be used in the first verse of the Psalm which the Lord quotes, *He is a Judge among gods.* Subordinately to this it is given to judges, because God gave them His word, and armed them with His authority to represent among their fellows His own especial office of judge. So that on the literal interpretation of the Scriptures it was not blasphemy to apply this word to those to whom God had given power to judge. Did then the Lord in saying this disclaim His true Godhead? No, so far from this He asserted it by implication in the highest sense; for whereas all other beings, whether angels or men, who might be called

gods, were so called because they exercised an inferior and delegated power, He, as the Son of God, exercised the same power as His Father, which resided in Him because He was the Son of God, and so partaking of the Father's nature. Yet even here, in deference to their ignorance before the out-pouring of the Spirit, He deigns to hide for a time the full revelation of His proper Sonship. He is the Son Whom the Father hath consecrated and sent into the world. Such an One has a far higher claim to be called Son than either angel or man, no matter how honoured by God. Let them but accept this one fact, that He comes from God, and they will see that One Who comes from God could not misrepresent His relations to God, and conversely, that God would not acknowledge by such mighty and beneficent miracles one who misrepresented or exaggerated His relationship to Him."

First Thought.—Our Lord will not suffer His people to forget that there is a fundamental distinction between human beings and all other creatures of this world. Men are ready enough to acknowledge their lordship over the rest of earthly creation, but not their kinship to God. One might fancy that all wise ones of our race would rejoice to know that man is made in the image of his Maker; nevertheless there seems

to be an insatiable desire to demonstrate the theory that we are wholly earth-sprung, and have no immortality. The divine religion insists that we are from above, and not of this world, save only as God took of the dust of the ground to fashion for His favoured creature, the soul breathed from the very divine One Himself, a body suited to that soul's probation time here below. The divine religion teaches us that the human race, thus heaven-sprung, was likewise endowed with supernatural grace and loveliness. Unhappily this supernatural glory was lost by man's choice of evil, nevertheless even in their fall God did not desert His creatures, but promised them redemption. And it is the wonder of our religion, that through the merits of our Lord's death upon the cross, our God-likeness is given back to us again. We are by Baptism verily incorporated into Christ, by Confirmation endowed with the sevenfold gift of the Holy Ghost, in the Eucharist fed with our Lord's own Flesh and Blood. Those who refuse regeneration at the font; those who go back after having been fed with the celestial food into ways of mortal sin; all such forfeit their high destiny as the children of God. But all who walk loyally in the ways of the Christian life have as their certain end participation in the divine nature. How then can we, to

whom such celestial things are promised, suffer ourselves to be weighed down or disquieted by the things of this present world? Our part is with greater and loftier matters, we belong to heaven, not to earth; to the spiritual world, not to this fleeting realm of things unsatisfying.

Second Thought.—What is our authority for all of this confidence concerning the world to come, and the part which is to be ours in it? God's revelation to His Church. Not indeed that the Bible has been given us by inspiration from on high in order that every man reading and studying it for himself, might thence deduce the whole doctrine of God, and the things which concern the soul; for He has not so left our faith at the mercy of the vagaries of individual understanding and judgment. Through His Church He has given us the faith and the law of Christian duty in very definite and precise form, but that fact does not make us value the Bible less. The Master expressly declares that the "Scripture cannot be broken." We need never fear the assaults of infidelity and unrestrained criticism upon the sacred books. They have a marvellous way of outliving all such attacks. It is our part ever to maintain tenaciously their infallible and undeceivable character, to do what lies in our power to overcome every one who would gainsay them, and

ourselves to treat them always with the utmost reverence. Much more than that we ought to do however: we ought to live continually with the Bible, to have its words constantly in our minds and on our lips, to make it more and more the stay and solace of our devotional life, the guide whereby our steps are ever ordered. The Scripture never has been broken; our Lord assures us that it cannot be broken.

Third Thought.—It is easy for us to forget that there is more than one way of accusing our Lord of blasphemy. Whether is worse, to refuse to believe that He is God, and therefore to maintain that those who assert His equality with the Father dishonour the Father, and are guilty of idolatry—or to acknowledge vehemently and persistently with our lips the divinity of our Master, and yet fail to accept His teachings? It avails one little to extol Him as God in the worship of the Church if one refuse to recognize His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and fail to bend the knee when one comes before the sacred Host. Does it profit one to repeat often and fervently the creed, if he insist that there is no supernatural power in the priesthood to act in Christ's stead?

More practically yet: No matter how loyally and enthusiastically we observe all the forms of Catholic worship; no matter how devoutly we

avail ourselves of all the sacraments of the Church; we may charge our Master with blasphemy by lightly setting aside those precepts of spiritual living in imitation of Himself which He so tirelessly enjoins. He bids us be of humble mind, esteeming others better than ourselves; He bids us love not money, but fear it as a snare to draw us away from spiritual things; He bids us cherish purity of heart, spurning every unchaste, unbecoming thing. If we make light of such precepts, and refuse to order our lives by them, we are in effect saying to Him, "Thou blasphemest"; for we are rejecting His authority as our Lord.

XCIV.

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him."—St. John x. 37, 38.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Here, as in almost every expression throughout this Gospel, there is the building up of highest doctrine, like a solemn creed, set to the music which is in heaven, with the same cadences ever and again returning. And as those things which are spoken of Christ are often in faint semblance fulfilled in those that are His, so by the works of good men it is known that God is in them, and they in God. As St. Augustine says, 'If our thoughts are good, we are in God; if our lives are good, God is in us.' But not in the same manner as the Only-begotten Son, equal to the Father; or in the same sense in which He says, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'"

And St. Chrysostom: "Seest thou how He

proveth what I said, that He is in nothing inferior to the Father, but in every way equal to Him? For since it was impossible to see His Essence, from the equality and sameness of the works He affordeth a proof of unvaryingness as to power. And what, tell me, shall we believe? *That I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* For I am nothing other than what the Father is, yet still the Son; He nothing other than what I am, yet still Father."

Stier comments as follows: "*If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* By this He seizes them and holds them fast, leaving them no way of escape. He simply repeats His frequent appeal to the testimony of His works, referring now in the *but if I do*, to their own tacit admission in the words, For a good work we stone Thee not, in order that He may subvert and bring to nought their falsely asserted independence of His good works, and His words. This last saying, which is given them for their knowing, that is perception, and faith—that the Father is in me, and I in Him, is the descending and yet true explanation of the rejected *we are one*. I have not said I am God, but merely—I and the Father; have called myself the Son of God in the sense assuredly of the oneness of divine nature. The result even of this utterance, received by that unbelief

which was rigidly set against all His true words, and all His good works, was the same as it had hitherto been; demonstrating the truth of our Saviour's words, *But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.* Once more does St. John record *an again.* They have given up their design of stoning Him, but they will lay hands on Him to bring Him to judgment and condemnation, while He withdraws once more from their power, and escapes their hands."

Sadler says: "An objection suggests itself which should be considered for a moment. Moses and the Prophets did some miracles, approaching, at least, in greatness to those which Christ did. Would these miracles prove that they were in God and God in them in the sense in which Christ uses the words? No, for it is clear that in a theocracy, such as that under which the Jews lived, they might have every confidence in God that He would protect them from false workers of miracles. If the prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha performed miracles, it was a sure sign that their message was true so far as it went. If it be conceivable that some prophet should have said something more of himself than they did, or should have delivered a message requiring more faith, then such a message, if accredited by such miracles as they performed, would have been true. Now they all

believed that a Prophet was to come Who was to be greater than all which went before Him; of Whom it was predicted that He should be in the closest possible union with God, nay, even the names of God seemed in some leading prophecies to be given to Him. If the Scriptures were true, that Prophet must come, and it was the universal belief that He was then to be expected. It was contrary then to all their views of God, and of their own relation to God as His people, to suppose that the God Who watched over them should allow them to be deceived by such works as those of our Lord, if He were not all that He claimed to be."

First Thought.—There is no right-minded Christian who does not feel the difficulty of trying to take upon his own lips, in his appeal to the world, the words of the Master, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." For while we feel that we are very earnestly desirous of doing the most Christ-like deeds, and that certain of the works we are trying to perform ought to be of the greatest blessedness to humanity, our own lives fall so far short of any true imitation of Christ as to lay us open to the charge of inconsistency. It is certain that there is no more grievous hindrance to the spread of the Gospel than the lives of the larger part of the professors of the Gos-

pel. Nevertheless the true believer does not lose sight of the fact that the works of Christ cannot be done apart from the Church. The answer to the world's scoff at the practical fruits of Christianity, as exhibited in the lives of Church members, is not the repudiation of the Church, or the keeping silent concerning her teaching, but persistent effort to amend our own lives. We shall probably never in this world reach a point where men can no longer find flaws and inconsistencies in our behaviour as the followers of Christ, but we need not on that account fancy that our works for Him are profitless. The one matter of supreme importance is the reality of our Christian profession. There will always be many things in the Gospel system which the world denounces as unworthy of Christ, though they be indeed expressly taught by Him. The world's judgment is of consequence to us only so far as it is true. Therefore the standard of conscience, as enlightened by the teachings of the Church, is the one we ought to be concerned about, and the only one. Where there is found the daily effort to conquer one's sins; where there is regular confession of the soul's shortcomings, and the humble seeking of the divine absolution; where there is ceaseless effort to avail one's self more and more of the divine grace, through all

the helps which the Church affords to devout living; one need not quail before accusations of inconsistency, but meekly acknowledging one's personal unworthiness to represent the Master, go on fearlessly insisting upon the power of all those gifts which that Master has bestowed upon His Church for the overcoming of such unworthiness.

Second Thought.—The works of Christ will always be gainsaid by many in the world, first because there are many who positively hate that which is good and true. They are distinctly on Satan's side, and must in his interest oppose whatsoever is for the uplifting and saving of mankind. Secondly, there are many others who unaffectedly desirous of the welfare of mankind, are in their ignorance persuaded that that blessed result is not to be brought about by Christ's religion, or perhaps only by Christ's religion as altered and amended in all sorts of ways to meet what they conceive to be the needs of modern life. In both these classes there are doubtless individuals whose hearts may be touched and their minds changed by the power of the Gospel, therefore the believer should never be discouraged in working and praying for their souls. But besides these there are millions who are ready to welcome the Gospel if only it can be brought home to them in its

perfection. We should never distrust the efficacy of our Lord's works; His taking flesh for man's salvation, His death upon the cross, His resurrection, His ascension into heaven. Those who are indeed hungering for salvation do not want a mutilated Gospel, though like children who do not know their own minds, they may fancy they do, and cry out for it, while they turn away from the full statement of the truth. We must persist fearlessly; we must never be weary of proclaiming the works of Christ, the work of regeneration, that is, of the new birth, through Baptism; the work of Confirmation, that is, of the armour of the Holy Ghost, to defend the believer from all his spiritual foes; the work of the divine sacrament of the altar, that is, the feeding upon the Body and Blood of the Lord; the work of the confessional, that is, of the unstinted loosing of men from the chains of their sins, in the sacrament of Penance. The servant of Christ may cry in the Lord's words: "Though ye believe not me, believe the works," make proof for yourselves, and find out what good things God has provided in His Church.

Third Thought.—The effect to be looked for as the result of a loyal acceptance of the works of Christ is a hearty grasp of the fact that the Father is in our Lord, and our Lord in Him. This personal religion of Christ is ever insisted

upon in the divine teaching, and it is just that which the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature, ceaselessly oppose.

1. The precepts of Christ never can supply a saving religion if loyalty to the person of Christ, as manifested in His worship, be left out.

2. A personal love of Christ, and an enthusiastic acclaiming of Him are profitless, if there be no genuine incorporation into His life through the sacramental system of the Church.

3. A devout sacramental life, full of Eucharistic homage, is but a mockery if there be no true patterning of the life upon that of Christ in good works, charitable speech, and an humble spirit.

4. All outward conformity to the teachings of the Master in worship, in sacramental living, in good works, cannot save us, if there be not such effort to bring about the utter extirpation of sin from our hearts as shall make it possible for Him to dwell in them.

XCV.

"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick). Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."—St. John xi. 1-4.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Scripture takes pains to speak of death as sleep, and especially in those cases which were images of resurrection. *Not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.* For the glory of God is His own glory; or His own glory is one with that of the Father."

And St. Chrysostom: "Since He intended to tarry two days where He was, He for the present sendeth away the messengers with this answer. Wherefore we must admire Lazarus's

sisters, that after hearing that the sickness was not unto death, and yet seeing him dead, they were not offended, although the event had been directly contrary. But even so they came to Him, and did not think that He had spoken falsely."

Trench says: "This saying, addressed to the messenger, is for him to carry back to them who sent him, is indeed spoken to them. The words are purposely enigmatical, and must have sorely tried the faith of the sisters. By the time that the messenger brought them back, Lazarus was already dead. Greatly therefore must this confident assurance of a happier issue have perplexed them. Had their heavenly Friend deceived them? or had He been Himself deceived? Why had He not excluded all room for mischance by Himself coming; or, if aught had hindered this, by speaking that word which, far off as near, was effectual to heal; which He had thus spoken for others, for those that were well-nigh strangers to Him, and had healed them? But, as with so many other of the divine promises, which seem to us for the moment to have utterly failed, and this because we so little dream of the resources of the divine love and the divine power, and are ever putting human limitations on these, so was it with this word—a perplexing riddle till

the event made it plain. Even now, in the eyes of Him Who saw the end from the beginning, that sickness was *not unto death*, and this they too should acknowledge, when, through the grave and gate of death, their brother should enter on a higher life than any which hitherto he had known. For this we may confidently assume, that it was a higher life than any which he had before lived to which Lazarus was recalled. That sickness of his was for the glory of God; in which glory was included the perfecting of his own spiritual being, as no doubt it was perfected through this wondrous crisis of his life. But all this, which was so much for him, was also a signal moment in the gradual revelation of the glory of Christ to the Church and to the world. The Son of God was first glorified in Lazarus, and then on and through him to the world."

Stier comments as follows: "The Lord's indefinite answer, which He gives without any added promise of coming, includes, on the one hand, a consolation which dispels the fear of death as the issue, but on the other, it leaves this sickness to itself, to run its appointed course. Indeed the concluding words, in their grand, indefinite generality, might have sug-

gested to thoughtful pondering hearers, that some mystery was involved in the apparently plain not unto death. For the glory and glorified had too lofty a sound for any ordinary recovery or healing. It is as if He had said, I know this sickness and its issue, so marvelously redounding to the glorification of God, full well! He knows already everything from the beginning—and this is the truth which pervades all St. John's description of His mysterious words and acts. Yet the more closely we contemplate this first utterance, the more designedly obscure does it appear, with all its tone of promise. It is abundantly easy to perceive that, if Lazarus died only that he might be raised again on the fourth day unto the glory of God, this sickness, yea, this brief death and sleep, was not essentially unto death in the ordinary sense, that is, unto abiding death.—His love wittingly delays, that it may more gloriously console them after their sufferings. The sickness and dying of those whom He loves is not a matter generally of such perilous and urgent moment: and this must His beloved ones in Bethany learn, and ourselves from them."

Sadler adds: "He foresaw all the consequences which would follow. He went to raise

Lazarus, and the fame of that miracle was the immediate cause of His death at the ensuing passover."

First Thought.—We are wont to look upon death as a very grievous evil in most cases, first because it deprives of the goodness and joy of life those who are dear to us, when they are taken away. Especially is this the case when death comes to the young, or to the middle-aged when they are in the full possession of their powers and the height of their earthly usefulness. Even the aged seem rarely to have reached a time when they would not enjoy living longer. And all serious sickness, though it may not eventuate in death, partakes of death's nature in our minds, as threatening it, and as causing pains and loss such as but culminate in death. Our Lord assures those who believe in Him that this is not the true view to take. "This sickness is not unto death." He sends sickness as the way to life. It seems to us in our ignorance a hard way, but it is certain that He orders the circumstances of every human being with the sole view of his eternal salvation. The sick one may not receive the divine visitation in the right spirit, and may not attain everlasting life; but neither would he have done so without the sickness. We ought

always to be grateful to God for the afflictions we are called upon to endure here, for by them He is affording us opportunity of attaining eternal life.

Secondly, we look upon death as an evil, because it bereaves us of those we love; and again we dread sickness, because it threatens that bereavement, and often begins it. Our Lord reminds us that from this point of view as well as from the other, "This sickness is not unto death." If we are truly His, and those whom we love are His, death can bereave us but for a moment, and that only to secure for us the bliss of everlasting friendship in the paradise of God. If we persist in centering all our thoughts upon the affection which may be enjoyed in this present world, He would have us remember that so to put this world before the other is to live in death. The apparent life of the present is but a dismal mockery of the reality, soon to pass, and to leave us only everlasting death. When we have learned the truth that the only real death, and the only real life, are that death and life which souls experience when they have passed out of this world, then we shall be able to estimate aright both sickness and death.

Second Thought.—One cannot but feel that

there is a further sense in our Lord's words than that which they bear superficially, namely, that there is a sickness unto death, the sickness of the soul, which is sin. We grieve greatly over the bodily ailments of such as are dear to us, especially when those ailments threaten death, but we grieve very little in most cases over sin-sick souls. We look upon this one and that one who have lapsed from their first faithfulness in the Christian life, and are now living, so far as we can see, without God in the world, and it seems hardly to trouble us at all, so long as their lives are outwardly upright, and morally exemplary from the world's standpoint. Yet there is every reason to fear that such people are going down to hell: they must end so unless something move them to repentance before it be too late. We ought to be greatly concerned because of such cases among our friends, perhaps our relations; and we ought to pray very earnestly for the souls of the erring ones, if perchance we may win from the Lord the assurance, "This sickness is not unto death." His word ought to be very comforting to us also in our own struggles with besetting temptation. The soul finds by sad experience its weakness, and is tempted to doubt whether it shall persevere to the end, its sickness is so grievous.

Never fear, O soul, if thou but continue faithfully to use the blessed helps of grace. To those who thus strive tirelessly the Master's word becomes true of every failure, every weakness; "This sickness is not unto death."

Third Thought.—The sickness and the pain, the soul's striving with temptation as well as the ills of the body, these melancholy things as they seem to us are all for the glory of God. It is His great glory to restore the sin-ruined universe, and in the divine wisdom it can only be restored by the willing endurance on man's part of the pains and disabilities of this world, culminating in death. When there is dutiful acquiescence in the law of suffering, that law becomes remedial, through the merit of our Lord's suffering, for all His followers; and thus God is glorified through our sickness and death. More especially are the world's afflictions for the glory of the Son of God, forasmuch as they afford Him opportunity of manifesting His infinite love by the death of the cross. Just as Lazarus was permitted to fall sick and to die, that by the miracle of his being restored to life again the enemies of our Lord might be moved to put the Master to death, because of the wonder of His working; so are all the miseries of fallen men allowed to exist, and to continue for a time, that the surpassing love of our Lord in

raising the unhappy ones up again may be declared, while the sinners themselves are exalted by penitence to a greater height of blessedness than any they could have attained without their fall; for those love most who have been forgiven most.

XCVI.

"Then after that saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."—St. John xi. 7-10.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "This seems a part of the preparation for what He was about to do. As in nearly all His miracles, He let fall some words that might draw attention to His purpose, and raise their hearts in expectation; so drawing forth their faith. In these His humiliations in the flesh with them, He appeared as one that feared persecution and death; and they were partaking in these His fears and sufferings. But He had retired from Judea, not from want of power to defend Himself, nor from fear of death; but to wait the great and appointed times of His dispensation; and to prepare others for His death; and this

His return was to carry on still the same intentions. *The disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again?* Not understanding His intention, they had perhaps been attributing His delay to apprehension of the Jews from whom He had just escaped, and might have understood His former words to mean that Lazarus would recover, or that His miraculous interposition to restore him would not require His personal or bodily presence there. But St. Chrysostom says that as yet He had not informed them where He was going, and that He now does so in order to prepare them for that which they so much feared, His going again among the Jews. *Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours of the day? If any one walk in the day, he stumbleth not because he seeth the light of this world. But if one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.* Our Lord's reply is in some degree similar to what He had said before the cure of the blind man, of working while it is day, of the night coming when none can work; but here in a different sense. The night of His death had not arrived, His hour was not yet come, He had now the day in which He must work. And the same interpretation will also include

that the night had not yet overtaken the Jews, it was still the day in which they might repent, the Sun of righteousness was yet among them. Or the words may be understood as a general principle of advice to us; that *he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*. That the will of God is the light in which we walk securely; no evil can happen to us while we are walking in that light; but our own will is darkness. The hearts and hands of the Jews being in His own power, He needed no protection in going among them, but what He says contains something to be exemplified in Him for our instruction. He that is pursuing the course of duty is walking in the light—that light which is vouchsafed him during this life, wherein he goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening; and in so doing, though he may incur danger and death, yet he cannot stumble: but he who shrinks from so doing is walking in the night; and his steps must needs be faltering; not from want of external light, but of that within. Thus Chrysostom explains it, ‘The upright need fear no evil; the wicked only have cause to fear.’ It is a beautiful application of St. Augustine’s that our Lord Himself is the day, and the twelve hours His twelve Apostles. For thus to walk in the day is to walk in Christ;

and to walk in Christ is to be in His Apostolic Church, wherein is the light of the Lamb of God."

Stier says: "Does not the Lord make the deepest view of the figure turn to the inward application? Is it not true of him who by his own fault walks outside his vocation, without obedient reference to God's will, that is, as here, in the night, that without the true light in him, no light shines upon him? Shine it never so brightly in the heavens, for his eye it exists not. . . . Watch for God's hour, and walk according to it, so wilt thou never suffer harm, and if thou goest to thy death, it will be as thy Lord and Master going to the resurrection of His friend. Only go with Him, even though at first with the mind of Thomas. But if thou regardest man alone, and avoidest danger, thou art already wandering in the night, and thy stumbling will surely find thee in thy weak retreating."

First Thought.—The believer may never forget that his life-work in the world is the glorifying of God and the furthering of His kingdom in the world. This is in no sense only the vocation of the clergy and of those who are more distinctively church-workers; it belongs to every member of Christ according to his or her

ability. "Going into Judea" may be understood as the definite carrying out of this vocation. For Judea was peculiarly God's country; there was His house of prayer, there the only divinely appointed form of worship. Moreover Judea was to be the scene of the Lord's passion, whereby the redemption of the world was wrought. We all have our occupations and duties in the natural life, which take up and absorb a large share of our time and attention, but if we are followers of Christ we must be constantly going back to the thought of doing for Him, of furthering His cause in such ways as may be open to us. So we shall be continually turning our faces God-ward and saying, "Let us go into Judea again." It has its application in our efforts to keep the Church's holy seasons, as Lent, more earnestly; in the entering from time to time into retreats, and quiet days, which many find helpful; it may be illustrated daily in the effort to attend the weekday Mass, or Vespers. It ought to be too that as we grow older there should be an increasing movement of the soul towards the spiritual life, in whatever ways may be open to it; an ever-growing longing to go into Judea should be found in us.

Let us not forget what we may expect to find

in that country of the divine things; even that which our Lord found. First, perhaps, the violent opposition of His foes. Our spiritual enemy is sure to assail us with special temptation when we thus turn to God. Again Judea was the land of our Lord's passion and death; we must expect to find hardness in it, and perhaps suffering; there must be on our part the practising of mortification, whereby our sinful inclinations are to be put to death. Let us however not shrink as our Lord's Apostles did from that journey into Judea, for only in Judea can we fulfil the service which God has given us to do.

Second Thought.—In His question, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" the Master would remind us that all our lives are marked out and ordered for us by the heavenly Father. There are no changes and chances of this mortal life which are independent of His overruling providence. Each life has its own proper twelve hours of the day, in which the servant of Christ may find time for accomplishing everything which is expected of him, whether his days be few or many as the world reckons. All the malice of the Evil One could not bring about our Lord's arrest one hour sooner than He willed it to be, nor could death snatch away

His soul upon the cross until He gave permission that so it should be and as He willed it to be.

We indeed fail very miserably in accomplishing our vocations; we waste a large part of our day of life, doing in its earlier hours the things which the later hours can with difficulty efface; yet we need not be discouraged if we but walk in the day, that is, in the light of our Lord's religion. He is the light of this world, the only true light. We stumble very often, but in every case it may be traced to our unfaithfulness in the ways of the Church. It is well that we should impress upon our minds the fact that nothing can cut off our lives prematurely, nothing hinder us from accomplishing every thing which God has assigned us in our vocations, nothing can make us stumble to our hurt, if we but be steadfast in our adherence to our religion and the ways of the Church. Wherever one finds unworthy Christian lives, he will find there has been unfaithfulness in Christian practice.

Third Thought.—It is impossible to persuade the children of this world that they are walking in darkness because they pattern not their lives after the religion of our Lord Christ. They are persuaded that the wisdom of man is quite

sufficient for all the wants of his life, and that his own strong will has no need of divine grace to coöperate with it. All who walk so must stumble, because they are walking in darkness; though they realize it not. In the eyes of men they may not appear to stumble; they may lead very upright lives so far as their conduct among their fellows is concerned; nevertheless they have utterly missed the true way of life, and cannot but stumble and fall to their ruin in the day in which the soul passes from the body that it may be brought before God to judgment.

For there is no natural light in man to enable him to walk aright. What we call the light of natural religion, whereby the heathen may save their souls, is God's true light to them, and His religion for them until He is pleased to vouchsafe them further light. But those who reject the light of revelation when it is offered them, no longer retain in them any saving light of nature. There is solemn warning in the Master's word for us all, for though we have light in us as Christ's servants, it is no impossible thing for that light to go out, if we do not by conscious daily effort keep it undimmed.

XCVII.

"These things said He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death, but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go to him."—St. John xi. 11-15.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "His disciples spake as if they would dissuade Him from going; taking His words, which were meant spiritually, as they often did, in a literal sense; yet by His going to awake him, they might have suspected a more mysterious meaning. *If he sleep, he will do well*; thus he who at death enters into rest, departing in peace, shall be saved in the resurrection of the Just. *Howbeit Jesus spake of his death; but they thought He was speaking of taking of rest in sleep.* 'To others,' says Augustine, 'he was dead; to Christ but sleeping'; for it was as easy

for Him to awaken the dead from the sepulchre, as for another one asleep from his bed. And Quesnel here very well observes, that Those who speak by the Spirit of God, use, even in common matters, expressions which are instructive, and which add light to the understanding. This which our Blessed Saviour here uses, teaches us that death is a kind of rest or sleep to the friends of Christ. . . . *And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there that ye may believe.* Such is the progressive nature of faith: though after the first miracle at Cana the disciples believed on Him, yet after cursing the fig tree at the last, it is said to them, Have faith in God; and this is, that ye may believe; and that thus believing they might be strengthened for His own death and resurrection. Instead of raising up Lazarus from sickness, as they whom He loved had asked; they are all by this miracle to be raised up with Lazarus unto the life of faith which will never die."

Trench comments as follows: "He anticipates the thought which must almost of necessity have arisen up in their minds, namely, why He had not been present to save. Through that absence of His there should be a fuller revelation of the glory of God than could have been from His earlier presence; a revelation

that should lead them, and in them all the Church, to loftier stages of faith, to a deeper recognition of Himself, as the Lord of life and of death. He is glad, for His disciples' sake, that it thus had befallen; for had He been upon the spot, He could not have suffered the distress of those so dear to Him to reach the highest point, but must have interfered at an earlier moment."

Bengel says: "It accords strikingly with our ideas of divine propriety, that we read of no one having died in the presence of the Prince of life."

Stier also: "From all antiquity men generally, and the Israelites especially, had used this euphemism in speaking of death (that is, as a sleep), yet rather with regard to its outward appearances and to throw a softening veil over the grave; but this phrase becomes a new and living one in the lips of our Lord, to disclose the great promise which had hitherto slumbered in Himself. We find in Job, *Man lieth down, and riseth not . . . nor shall they be raised out of their sleep . . .* but the Lord promises here in simple majesty an *I will awake him*. To this end I go."

Sadler says: "The miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus was especially for the confirma-

tion of the Apostles' faith, more than for the consolation of the sisters; and we may be sure, from the Lord's words, that they required such a sign to enable them to adhere to Him unto the end."

First Thought.—It is probable that we should not regard the death-sleep of Lazarus as quite akin to the condition of other of the departed. Our Lord does not suggest any sleep of the soul when He tells us of Dives and Lazarus the beggar in the world of spirits. It may be that the soul of the brother of Martha and Mary was by the divine will retained within reach, as it were, of the body, and that it did not go forth into hades. Certainly it could hardly have been brought into judgment. If it be so there is especial force in the Lord's form of speech here, that Lazarus was sleeping, that is, was not yet removed from the possibilities of probation. No doubt he had been an upright God-fearing man . . . otherwise our Lord had hardly loved him as He did; yet it may be that he had failed to rise up to the fulness of devout living to which God would have him come, and needed just this experience of resurrection from the dead to enable him to so rise up to it. In such case he becomes a type of many nominal believers living in the world who have fallen

into a state of spiritual lethargy, which must eventually mean the death of their souls, except God shall awaken them out of their sleep before it be too late.

1. There are those who have become so absorbed, for one reason or another, in the things of the present life that they have lost all keen sense of the spiritual realities. They may keep up in their lives an outward form of religion, but it is only perfunctory, it has no reality for them. Very often this spiritual deadness results from discouragement, because of the apparent hopelessness of earthly conditions. Our Lord has His own merciful way of awakening such souls out of their sleep. Perhaps He sends much sharper adversity than the unhappy one has known before, wretched health or bitter bereavement. The very intensity of the pain arouses the sleeper, brings him to a sense of his spiritual state, and moves him to repentance.

2. In other cases the soul-torpor is the result of sin; one has permitted himself to indulge in this or that sinful course until it has become second nature to him, and conscience no longer raises the feeblest protest. Then the loving Master seeks to awaken the perishing one; perhaps by causing him to experience some temporal penalty of his sin, retribution either of

nature, or at the hands of his fellow-men who have been made to suffer in some way through him. It may be that by being thus brought into trouble through his evil courses the sleeper will be awakened, and rise from the dead.

3. Yet again, there is that most perilous sleep of spiritual self-complacency; the soul well-content with its religious state fancies itself on the high road to heaven, while in reality it is going down to hell because of its utter lack of penitence, of charity, of humility. The Master will not suffer it to perish without putting forth His power to awaken it. He causes the chance word of rebuke, perhaps, to penetrate the armour of the soul's self-sufficiency, or in some other way the Spirit probes in that torpid nature till He touches a responsive chord; then at last the dead one awakes, thanking God for saving him from the pit.

Second Thought.—When one has learned to look at the mysteries of sin and pain, death and resurrection from the dead, as our Lord teaches us to look at them, he welcomes the afflictions and the trials of this present life just because they serve to awaken him, and keep him from fatal slumber. The earnest believer fails not to realize how easily he becomes drowsy and is in peril of that deadly sleep.

More than that he comes to take pleasure in the thought of death itself, forasmuch as he perceives it to be the gate which must be passed in order to enter upon immortality. Without death there could be no resurrection, and if no resurrection no glorious heavenly future for mankind. This is because we cannot escape from the fact of sin. There are those who would like to ignore the necessary existence of sin in humanity, but the Christian knows better. He knows that no man can live without sin, save through absolute loyalty to Christ in the life of grace; as a matter of fact none of us does so live. Therefore the debt of sin must be paid before there can be freedom. We must die, for so, if we belong to Christ, the gift of immortality comes. We ought to welcome death, not with the childish notion that by dying we shall escape our miseries, but because, if we are in Christ, it is the finishing of our probation time, and the entrance into purgatory, wherein all our Lord's most gracious work of raising us up into the fulness of the heavenly life finds its sure accomplishment.

Third Thought.—He cares greatly that we should believe. He allowed Lazarus to die, his sisters to be plunged into the deepest grief, and occasion afforded His own enemies to take Him

and put Him to death, to the intent that His followers might believe. It is because belief on our part is absolutely essential to the success of His gracious work for our salvation. We persist very often that we want to believe, but we cannot, we are unable to accept the marvelous things proposed to our faith. Yet faith can be acquired and grasped as the gift of God if we be but eager enough for it.

1. We must dwell in mind and heart on the celestial things, the truths which our Lord has revealed. They have a wonderfully convincing way of bringing themselves home to us if we will permit them.

2. We must accept with absolute simplicity and directness whatsoever our Lord teaches us. He knows, and He is our Master. When He bids us pray we must pray with confidence in His answering; when He bids us live, act, speak, think, as He does in the Gospel, we must actually pattern our lives after that model. Frank unquestioning obedience to whatever He enjoins always brings faith as its reward; it is only when we fail in obedience that faith grows weak.

XCVIII.

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, Which should come into the world."—St. John xi. 23-27.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Our Lord was preparing her, as His custom was, by degrees for the miracle. *Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again at the last day;* implying thereby more than she expressed, for her mention of the last day intimates a latent thought of some other rising. It seems from this that she must have heard from Christ Himself of the resurrection on the last day; for it could hardly have been so distinctly recognized among the Jews. *Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life.* Ezekiel prophesies, *Ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have*

opened your graves. Where I am there is Resurrection and Life; in me is the fountain of immortality, dependent on my will alone. *I am*, it is the divine *I am*. I need not as man ask of God; no need to wait for the last day, for I am here already: no rising on that day but in me: not the Author of resurrection and Giver of life, but the Resurrection and Life itself. *He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:* though he die in this temporal life, yet true life he shall have; or, though he seem with men to be dead, as in the book of Wisdom: *In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die.* But the words contain a spiritual meaning, which doubtless our Lord intends throughout; though dead in soul, yet by faith in me shall he recover. *And whosoever liveth, in this mortal life, and believeth on me, shall never die,* or shall not die for ever, in everlasting death. 'From whence,' says Augustine, 'is the death in the soul? Because faith is not. Whence death in the body? Because the soul is not there. Therefore the soul of thy soul is faith.' Lazarus needeth the soul to enter the body for life temporal; thou needest faith to enter thy soul for life eternal. *Believest thou this?* More is required than what thou already hast said. *She saith unto Him, Yea,*

Lord, I have believed, my belief hath been, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, That cometh into the world: that is, full faith in the incarnation is here expressed. By this faith man must be joined on to God for such a miracle."

Trench comments as follows: "When we ask ourselves what this title, *The Resurrection*, involves, we perceive that in one aspect it is something more, in another something less, than that other title of *The Life*, which Christ also challenges for His own. It is more, for it is life in conflict with and overcoming death; it is life being the death of death, meeting it in its highest manifestation, that of physical dissolution and decay, and vanquishing it there. It is less, for so long as that title belongs to Him, it implies something still undone, a mortality not yet wholly swallowed up in life, a last enemy not yet wholly destroyed and put under His feet. As He is *the Resurrection* of the dead, so is He *the Life* of the living—absolute Life, having Life in Himself, for so it has been given Him of the Father, the one fountain of Life; so that all who receive not Life from Him pass into the state of death, first the death of the spirit, and then, as the completion of their death, the death also of the body. . . . In the other member of the verse,

as so often in our Lord's words, the temporal death is taken no account of, but quite overlooked, and the believer in Him is contemplated as already lifted above death, and made partaker of everlasting life."

Stier writes of the same words: "He who lives in Jesus by faith hath in himself the principle of the resurrection, of the final victory over death; death must lose all its power and be abolished in him. He cannot and will not sink again into the essential ground of death, or in more Scriptural language there is no hades that can hold his spirit."

Of Martha's reply to our Lord's question, *Believest thou this?* Sadler says: "It was an amazing demand on her faith, but the faith which He had given her was equal to the demand, and in her answer she set forth the one sole ground on which, as one of the ancient people of God, she could exercise implicit faith in His word, even when He set forth so astonishing a thing respecting Himself."

First Thought.—We all believe in the life of the world to come. We are sure that the souls of our dear ones have very real existence in the land of spirits, and although we speak of them often as those who sleep, yet we know that that figure is suggested rather by the condition of

the body than that of the soul. We believe too, in a more or less vague way, in the resurrection of the body; nevertheless we are hardly able to grasp the fulness of meaning contained in that truth. We go to the well-filled cemetery and look upon the long rows of graves, numbering thousands, and we are wont to muse upon the shortness and uncertainty of human life, the unreality and the tragedy of it often. Then we hear, as it were, our Lord's voice, saying, "Thy brother shall rise again." All this apparent triumph of death is but a temporary cessation of the bodily activity of the individual in order to the preparation of both soul and body for a larger and unending existence. Every one of these dead bodies is to arise; there is no soul of the numberless millions which now fill the spirit world, which shall not at the sound of the trumpet issue forth and find its own body awaiting it; transformed indeed from that which it was in the temporal condition of this present earth, nevertheless the same body. No one can fail of that reviving at the last day; many doubtless would gladly escape it had they the power. The wicked must shrink from their awakening to the eternal realities with unutterable horror, for they know already how grievous are the woes of hell, even for disembodied spirits. It is good for us to dwell

often upon the tremendous fact of the resurrection as our Lord teaches it. This present life is but an undeveloped preparatory condition of our being, and death but the bringing into action of those forces which are to fashion each one for that which is to be his everlasting destiny in heaven or in hell.

Second Thought.—How confidently does our Lord refer every thing in the matter of our salvation directly to Himself. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," He says. He is the Resurrection of all, for it is His will to bring back every soul at the last day from the world of spirits and to clothe it with its own body. But He is more than the Resurrection, He is also the Life for all who believe in Him. He alone can make resurrection worthy the name, the entrance upon a glorious immortality; but this He promises freely to all who believe in Him. Of what sort then is the belief which is to secure for us everlasting life? We need not elaborate it; the meaning was surely intended to be simple. Our Lord must be heartily and loyally accepted as one's Master, and obeyed according to the light He has been pleased to vouchsafe to each soul. Genuine loyalty of discipleship—such as shall stand when He tests it—must be found. And what then?

1. Though the believer were dead, though through the weakness of his nature and the stress of temptation he have fallen into mortal sin, yet so long as he remains in the flesh he may live again, by seeking the Master's forgiveness in repentance.

2. Yet again, whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally. It is very significant that He does not say, Whosoever liveth and continueth to live; but the condition is, "believeth in me," for one cannot truly live without that. The upright moral man, who never consciously breaks one of the commandments, has because of that no immunity from everlasting death. The element of personal loyalty to Christ is always fundamental; only where that is found, can there be hope of immortality.

Third Thought.—As a wise preacher, not content with having strongly and clearly propounded the divine doctrine, the Master makes personal appeal to the hearer; "Believest thou this?" We are ready to say with alacrity, when questioned, that we believe the Catholic faith, howbeit when our Lord thus Himself asks us, it is wise not to be content with any hasty and unreflecting answer.

1. Do we believe His doctrine of the Res-

urrection and the Life in such sort that we sorrow not hopelessly over the graves of our dear ones, nor ever fail to pray for their souls?

2. Do we so believe it that we ever hold our lives in check, and bring them to sharp accounting at the bar of an exacting conscience, a conscience which tolerates no thought, word, or deed disloyal to our Master Christ? It is the rigour of daily unsparing self-examination alone which can prepare the soul for that unerring judgment of the All-holy One which must be faced in the day of its passing.

3. Do we so believe it that we cannot go on in our life-work contentedly without, after every lapse into serious sin, seeking the confessional, and there making our peace with God?

XCIX.

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"—St. John xi. 33-37.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Human affections were in Him the result of His own divine will: at His own will He became weak and was troubled. 'Jesus hungered,' says Augustine, 'but because He willed; Jesus slept, but because He willed; Jesus was sorrowful, but because He willed; Jesus died, but because He willed; it was in His power to be so affected or not at all.'—Thrice is this distress spoken of; first, on beholding Mary and the Jews weeping; secondly, with them, as He was going to the sepulchre; and now when He was there. Our Lord's suffering humanity is as marked throughout this occasion as the power of His

Godhead. And St. Chrysostom observes that 'St. John who enters into higher statements respecting our Lord's nature than the other Evangelists, descends also lower than any other in describing His bodily sorrows that came home to the compassionate heart of the Son of man'. Yet those sorrows He knew that He should immediately remove. And to believe in Him was to be free from all those sorrows and from death. Yet He wept, 'because,' says one, 'He was Himself the very Fountain of pity'. He weeps and mingles with us human tears, although the cause of those tears is our want of faith: He is as one weak in our weakness; and sad in our sadness, weeping with them that weep; as men weep at the sight of the tomb which covers them whom they love. And thus doth He take upon Himself human impressions, and sanctifies to us human sorrows."

Trench comments as follows: "The word which we translate groaned is far more expressive of indignation and of displeasure than of grief: which last, save as a certain amount of it is contained in all displeasure, it means not at all. . . . This indignation of the Lord's is capable of a perfectly adequate explanation. It was the indignation which the Lord of life felt at all that sin had wrought. He beheld death in all its dread significance as the wages

of sin; the woes of a whole world, of which this was but a little sample, rose up before His eyes; all its mourners and all its graves were present to Him. For that He was about to wipe away the tears of those present and turn for a little while their sorrow into joy, did not truly alter the case. Lazarus rose again, but only to taste a second time the bitterness of death; these mourners He might comfort, but only for a season; these tears He might stanch, only again hereafter to flow; and how many had flowed, and must flow with no such Comforter to wipe them, even for a season away. As He contemplated all this, a mighty indignation at the author of all this human anguish possessed His heart. And now He will no longer delay, but will at once do battle with death and with him that hath the power of death, the devil; and spoiling though but in part, the goods of the strong man armed, will give proof that a Stronger is here. And that they may the sooner stand face to face, He demands, *Where have ye laid him?*"

Of these words, "Where have ye laid him?" St. Augustine says: "Thou knowest that he is dead, and of where he is buried art Thou ignorant? This again is significant; to show that when a man is in this undone condition, God, so to say, knoweth him not. I durst not say

outright, *knoweth not*; for what is there that He knoweth not? But, 'So to say, knoweth not.' How prove we this? Hear the Lord as He will speak in the judgment, *I know you not, depart from me*. How, *Know you not*? I do not see you in my light, do not see you in that righteousness which I know. So here also, as though not knowing a sinner of this sort, He said, *Where have ye laid him*? Such is that voice of God in paradise, when man had sinned, *Adam, where art thou*?"

First Thought.—There must always be deep mystery for us while we are here below, in the fact that our Lord shows Himself at once so weak and so strong to overcome the evil that is in the world. He is absolute Lord of all creatures, and crushes Satan, despite all his power, into utter helplessness; nevertheless He groans in the spirit and is indignant because of the ruin wrought among men by that Evil One. We see the solution of the difficulty partially in the fact of man's free agency, that God will not coerce him, but leaves him always, while he is in this world, with power to choose the evil or the good. Satan has dominion over us because we surrender to him and choose his service rather than that of God. All that the Master could do at this time was to foil the

malice of the adversary by raising Lazarus from the grave. That was but an infinitesimal part of the work which must be done if the whole race is to be freed not from natural death only, but from the eternal woe of hell. Though His time was not yet come for the larger and decisive battle the Master hastened to this preliminary struggle, asking, "Where have ye laid him?" But though only this much could be done just at that time, His indignation tells us of the spirit which moved Him to set before Him the whole task of man's redemption.

We may never plead that we have but little power to do anything to further the Master's cause in the world, and that therefore we must be content to wait idly doing nothing. First of all, we are called upon after His example to be moved with a great indignation against sin and all its unhappy fruits in the world. God loves to see us angry in His cause, full of desire to avenge Him of His adversaries. It is to be feared that in most lives He does not find any burning zeal for the extirpation of evil from the world. Secondly, if we are indeed in earnest in our indignation at sin, we shall go on heartily to do whatsoever is within our power, be it never so small a thing, even as our Lord went on to raise Lazarus that day. It is no trivial thing in His eyes that we have been

instrumental in raising up through repentance even one soul dead in trespasses and sins. If we do the small things which are in our power, we may trust Him to make them of use in bringing about the full result which He would have.

Second Thought.—The Lord asked of those who stood by Him from the household of Lazarus, "Where have ye laid him?" Not because He did not know, for He is omniscient, but that they might tell Him themselves, and so realize more perfectly the greatness of the miracle which He was about to work among them. So of such as have fallen into sin, and turn to Him seeking His help, He first asks, "Where have ye laid him?" Where have ye buried that divinely bestowed Christ-life which was yours by Baptism, and was sustained and nourished by many a sacrament? This one has buried his immortality in the grave of worldliness; the things of this present life have been permitted to crowd out the things of God. That one has buried his in sensual gratification, giving himself up to pleasure and self-indulgence, until the divine things have quite disappeared from his life. Yet another has learned to care only for self, to exult in his own greatness, his ambitions, the eminence which he hopes to attain

among his fellows. Yet often there is a longing in the hearts of such people for better things; the Spirit is calling them to repentance. If only the Lord would raise the dead, and give them back their forfeited inheritance. He requires first the acknowledgment of our lapsing, on our part; "Where have ye laid him?" Tell the tale of the besetting temptation, how it was suffered to have its own way more and more until it quite succeeded in persuading the believer to turn his back upon the light. Christ will not know us as sinners who seek no release from their sins; we must come to Him declaring frankly what we have done, and with honest penitence for it: then we may hope for resurrection.

Third Thought.—It were well if at every burial which we attend in public cemeteries or quiet churchyards, we should ask ourselves as we turn aside from the filled grave, Where have we laid our brother or our sister? Our Lord could speak thus of the body of Lazarus, forasmuch as his soul was not yet separated from it in permanent sort, but only for those few days which elapsed before the Master reached Bethany. We lay the bodies of our dead in the ground, but where are their souls? Either in purgatory, being prepared for the bliss of Para-

dise, or in hell with the lost. He would have us not forget this solemn deposition of the soul. We have but little to do with it, perhaps, yet who knows how much for good or for ill depends upon the priestly ministrations we secure for our sick ones before they are too far gone to be helped by them? Who can say indeed how far each one of us is responsible for the spiritual state of our dear ones in the hour of their passing. It were good for us to dwell upon this more. The flower-covered grave is very precious in the eyes of mourners, but we should not forget the souls of the departed, and where we have laid them, so far as we had power to influence their eternal destiny.

C.

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"—St. John xi. 39, 40.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "*Jesus then, again groaning within Himself, cometh to the grave. And let Him so groan in thee, if thou art minded to come to life again: this is said to every man, whoever has a load of most wicked custom weighing upon him. The dead man beneath the stone is the guilty sinner beneath the Law. For ye know that the Law which was given to the Jews was written on stone. Now all that are guilty are under the Law; they that live good lives are with the Law. The Law was not given for a righteous man. What meaneth then, Take ye away the stone? Preach grace. For the Apostle saith of himself that he is a minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for*

the letter, he saith, killeth, the spirit giveth life. The letter killing is as it were the stone pressing down. *Take away, saith He, the stone.* Take away the weight of the Law: preach grace."

And St. Chrysostom: "Why did He not when at a distance summon Lazarus and place him before their eyes? Or rather, why did He not cause him to arise while the stone lay yet on the grave? For He Who was able by His voice to move a corpse, and to show it again endowed with life, would much more by that same voice have been able to move a stone; He Who empowered by His voice one bound and entangled in the grave-clothes to walk, would much more have been able to move a stone; why then did He not so? In order to make them witnesses of the miracle; that they might not say as they did in the case of the blind man, "It is he," "It is not he." For their hands, and their coming to the tomb testified that it was indeed he."

Isaac Williams says: "He came to the sepulchre, it was a cave, on the side of a hill or rock, and a stone lay upon it, not over it, but placed up against it as a door, and probably so large as to require combined strength to remove. *Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone.* He asked them where he was buried; He asks

them to remove the stone; in things human He is as man, in things divine as God. And now, on beholding this opening of the grave, half shrinking back with dismay and dejection; *the sister of him that was dead, Martha, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he is four days dead, or in the grave.* As if saying it is now too late to restore him. Augustine, or the writer in his name, supposes that they had often seen instances of our Lord raising the dead; but did not fully believe that He could do this. But this seems uncertain, if not improbable. *Jesus saith unto her, Did I not tell thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* either in express words, unrecorded at this time, or in those general expressions which intimated it."

Stier comments as follows: "Step by step He approaches gradually the great act, in order to qualify the amazement of poor mortal eyes on beholding the glory of God. He might indeed have commanded the stone to roll itself away, as a mountain or a fig tree; He might even have commanded Lazarus to come forth through the impediment of the stone. But the miracles of God avoid with supreme propriety all that is superfluous. What men's hands might remove, He commands them to take away. . . . The sure foundation of such faith

as He requires is after all no other than His word. Is it not enough that He hath said it? In His love how often has He spoken it. After every minor and preparatory fulfilment pointing back to His own words, to shame and elevate His weak servant. *Did I not say unto thee?* But how deeply rooted in us is unbelief! Was it possible that the Raiser of Lazarus could remain in His own grave? Yet did not He Who predicted His own rising again on the third day, find it needful to demonstrate in His own case the truth of His own reproving question? They none of them believed, John no more than Thomas. Yet He rose again among them and for them; and from this we learn that the condition, *If thou wouldst believe* is not so rigorously intended; but the Beginner and Finisher of our faith strengthens, rewards, and consummates the weakest faith which He beholds."

First Thought.—There could hardly be found any more sad proof of the practical unbelief of a large part of the nominally Christian world than the complacency with which we are wont to think of the condition of the departed. We lament the taking away of our dear ones, we mourn for them, but not with any disquiet in most cases concerning their souls. We assume with the world that every one is going to be

happy hereafter, unless it may be a very few hardened reprobates; God is too kind to punish anyone everlastingly. As a consequence of our optimism, very many are quite content to live upright moral lives, ignoring God and His service; indeed disregarding all the obligations of the Christian profession. This unbelief in the importance of devout living is like the stone upon the grave of Lazarus; it decorously closes the tomb, and conceals the decay which is going on within, it effectually hinders resurrection save by a miracle. So long as believers are content to acquiesce in the world's assumption that moral uprightness is quite enough to secure whatever happiness is to be found in the life to come, the stone will remain, and hinder thousands of those who might be saved from coming to the knowledge of the truth. "Take ye away the stone," the Master says: do not permit the world about you to go on thinking that men can be saved without loyalty to Christ. Insist upon the Gospel truth, that only through regeneration and sanctification, only through the sacramental life can anyone hope for the blessedness of heaven. We should fear greatly for all those who have passed away without availing themselves of that salvation which our Lord so freely offers. We ought to pray for them indeed, for we know not what miracles

of mercy the goodness of God may have worked in their case; but not less important is the effort, while we are here, to labour tirelessly to remove that stone of unbelief which is surely hindering the salvation of many all about us.

Second Thought.—It is natural for us, if we be religiously inclined, to think of ourselves as among Christ's followers, who are to inherit the promises, if we but persevere unto the end; and to regard the warnings of the Gospel as directed towards those who are not concerned to follow the teachings of the Church. Nevertheless we may be in far greater peril ourselves, than many another for whose salvation we are very earnestly praying. For those who have been made to know the revelation of Christ have great responsibility for its keeping. As a matter of fact most of us have not dread enough of sin. We admit that we are grievous sinners, yet we are distinctly complacent as we acknowledge the fact, because almost all other good people are grievous sinners too. One cannot help sinning—so we excuse ourselves, and do not go heartily about the work of eradicating our sins. We close up our inner soul life, where the roots of evil are so deeply buried; we keep, as it were, a great stone before the place; men would never know that anything was buried

there. The Lord says, "Take ye away the stone," that is, uncover your sins, bring forth the corrupting mass into the light of day, that by the divine grace it may be restored. There you have the whole principle of the Church's gracious sacrament of Penance; the uncovering of our misdoings in confession, that God's pardon may be our healing. Doubtless He could have raised Lazarus without requiring the taking away of the stone from the tomb: doubtless He could pardon our sins without requiring us to confess them; but not so does He will to work.

Third Thought.—We plead that we cannot believe all the teaching of the Church concerning sin, even as the worldly-minded plead that the principles of the Catholic religion are beyond their understanding; and when we have said, We *cannot* believe, we persuade ourselves that we are exempt from the obligations which belief imposes. But to Martha our Lord said, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God," implying that it was no more than a matter of the will, whether one believe or not. He has revealed Himself to us completely attested in many different ways; there is no possible reason why we should not accept that which He teaches. This does not mean

that we must of necessity have a lively sense, or vivid consciousness of the reality of His being. It is enough that we know for a fact that He is in very truth what He declares Himself to be. The first stage in belief is obedience, and it is just this sort of belief which He requires of us. We believe Him by hearkening to His voice, and earnestly setting ourselves to obey His commandments, one and all. In the keeping of those commandments, in the daily round of obedience, we shall little by little come to see the glory of God.

CI.

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me."—St. John xi. 41, 42.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams comments as follows: "He was about to pray, says Origen, for the resurrection of Lazarus, but presenting His prayer, the Father Who only is good, heard and answered what He was about to say. He lifted up His eyes, as showing His union with the Father; as teaching us in prayer to lift up our soul to God; and, indeed, the very act was in Him of itself an act of prayer. *He lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me; and I knew that Thou hearest me always; but on account of the people which stand around I have spoken, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me.* The greatest demonstrations of Godhead, both in word and deed, are combined with these

humiliations, wherein He is inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. The miracle of the loaves was with lifting up the eyes in prayer, and characterized by *the Lord having given thanks*. To the Jews at Jerusalem, His mission from, and submission to the Father is as continually dwelt upon as His divinity and unity of substance with the Father. St. Chrysostom says, His words show humility, His works power. This is true; but there is much in what Origen observes, that resurrection is thus the joint work of the Father and the Son, One praying, and the Other hearing. Perhaps this prayer spoken of may have been in what was before described; that interceding of the Spirit with groanings that cannot be uttered. God created man by a word—without effort; but He recalls him to life not without many groans, and tears, and intercessions, amid all around weeping, the whole creation as it were groaning and travailing together with pain, waiting for the redemption; and with many co-operating; asking in faith, removing the stone; loosing the bands. Moreover, these expressions of humiliation bring us into fellowship with Himself; for their sakes came the Voice from heaven of the Father to the Son; for their sakes the Son speaks on earth to His Father in heaven. It is of man to pray, and to know in

the Spirit that his prayer is heard, and that God heareth him always; these expressions therefore, are, so to speak, human; for our sakes as to example, as well as to doctrine."

Trench says: "The thanks to the Father are an acknowledgment that the power which He is about to display is from the Father. But any such thanksgiving might easily have been misinterpreted by the disciples then, and by the Church afterwards; as though it would have been possible for the Father not to have heard Him,—as though He had first obtained this power to call Lazarus from his grave, after supplication; had, like Elisha, by dint of prayer painfully won back the life which had departed; whereas the power was most truly His own, not indeed in disconnection from the Father, for what He saw the Father do, that also He did; but in this, His oneness with the Father, lay for Him the power of doing these mighty acts. Therefore He explains, evidently not any more in a voice audible by all those present, but so that His disciples might hear Him, what this *Father I thank Thee*, meant, and why it was spoken: *And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me.* For them it was wholesome: they should thus understand that

He claimed His power from above, and not from beneath; that there was no magic, no necromancy here."

Sadler says: "Even to mere men God has given such a promise as, *Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear*; and if it can be so with us who are separate from God, what must it be with One Who is in the Father, and the Father in Him? The Lord having secret and unbroken intercourse with His Father, which recognizes no limitations of time, speaks of that as certain and as having taken place, which was yet, in the eyes of men, about to take place, and gives thanks accordingly."

First Thought.—Very full of beautiful suggestion is this account of our Lord thanking His heavenly Father for having heard Him, when there is no record of any prayer made by Him in this connection. For we may be sure that it means that His soul was ever in the attitude of prayer towards His Father, a constant dwelling upon everything in sympathetic union with the Father. He was ever praying in thought, when there was no formulating of that which He would ask in words. As if one, sitting close beside a dear and sympathetic friend might simply, in the hour of grief, or doubt,

or trouble of any sort, dwell in the secret places of his own mind upon the disquieting conditions and circumstances, while never uttering in the ears of his friend one word; and yet find at every point in his train of thought a gentle pressure of the hand of that friend upon his hand, telling unmistakably that he was in touch with the thinker's mind, followed all its moods and changes, understood, sympathized, and was helping with fullest coöperation of his own mind. We may all have this experience of the nearness of God, and His responsiveness, if we will but cultivate it.

1. There must be a continual lifting up of heart and mind to Him, giving Him our fullest confidence in everything. Under such circumstances one never fails to find the sympathetic acknowledgment of His delight in our approach.

2. If our devotional union with Him be genuine there must be on our part a great thankfulness, a constant sense of His goodness, and the desire to praise Him for it, for there could hardly be greater cause for joyous gratitude than the consciousness that one was never out of touch with his heavenly Father.

3. That consciousness ought to beget in us ever more ardent longing for communion with Him, the eagerness to realize with increasingly

clearer sense those strange yet unmistakable manifestations of His perfect responsiveness to every devout approach on our part.

Second Thought.—In declaring the readiness of God to hear and answer all devout prayer, *for the sake of those who stand by*, we have to remember that there is a fundamental difference between our case and that of our Lord. He could not possibly do anything for effect, or that He might win the admiration of men for Himself. We are always in danger of posing if we lay too much stress upon the duty of setting an example to others. Nevertheless we are expressly commanded to let our light shine before men. The important matter seems to be that we should be absolutely genuine in our Christian practice, remembering always that we have to give answer to God for our lives, and in that way to make sure that we shall furnish the example our Lord demands of us; if we are true of heart ourselves we shall certainly afford to others the illumination which God desires us to afford, though it may not be just the sort of light which men most welcome at our hands.

1. If we persist in leaning with absolute confidence upon our heavenly Father, never suffering ourselves to be disquieted by circum-

stances, nor to lose courage, it cannot but result that our lives react helpfully upon others, and impart to them some measure of our confidence in the divine goodness.

2. If it be manifest that our souls are ever overflowing with a great happiness, which no sorrow, no adversity of this world can affect; if it be clear that the only thing which distresses us is sin, the consciousness of having displeased our heavenly Father—then, no matter how inconspicuous our lives may be in the world they will bear witness to those with whom we come into contact that there is a staying power in the sense of the union of the soul with God, which is worth far more than the cost of the most strenuous efforts made to secure it.

Third Thought.—It is fundamental to their salvation that men should accept the Christ type of devout living. This is not a natural one. It is fair to say that man, with all the piety of the patriarchs and saints of Old Testament days, could never have evolved the ideal which our Lord sets before us. Our lives ought to be such, in their trustfulness and joyfulness, as to make our fellow-men acknowledge the Master Christ as rightly Lord and King over all. That type of holiness accents strongly the cross, demands of those who seek it hardness,

self-denial, the surrender of many of this world's pleasant things, the flinging away of its ambitions and the desire of its praise. It demands of them humility, the willingness to be imposed upon and taken advantage of, indifference to their rights, scrupulous attention to all their obligations. The ideal of the suffering and persecuted Christ never can be a pleasing one to the natural man. It can only become mighty to attract men when they are able to perceive that it is able to supply to its followers, content, fearlessness as to the future, peace of conscience and an invincible hope; for no other type of life has ever brought these good gifts to the human soul. Through it the servants of Christ have great power to make men know their Master as Him Whom the Father hath sent.

CII.

"And when He had thus spoken, He cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."—St. John xi. 43, 44.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "It was the voice of God. *The dead—all that are in their graves—shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.* Yea, it was the voice of God-man, it was the *loud voice*, at the sound of which, at Christ's death, the saints arose. A symbol, says St. Cyril, Ambrose, and others, of that great voice of the trumpet which shall sound at the resurrection. Nay, it is more than a symbol, it is that voice itself which shall penetrate every abyss of the earth and of the sea. And it is by name that Lazarus is called, lest all the dead should have arisen, says St. Augustine. It is a sign of personal knowledge of each; and of individual identity in the great resurrection. He calleth them all by their names. *He calleth His own*

sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And he that was dead came forth, bound hands and feet with graveclothes; and his countenance was bound about with a napkin, literally, was tied around with a handkerchief. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

St. Augustine dwells on the whole as applying to the conversion of the soul; the four days dead to the inveteracy of an evil habit; the great stone to the heart of stone, or the heavy weight of the Law of death; the loud voice to the powerful call of grace within; the bonds of sin still about him, from which he is released by those to whom Christ has given power to bind and to loose. And in like manner St. Gregory, who dwells especially upon the words, *Come forth*, as implying confession of deadly sin. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* And thus also Ludolphus: He might at once have loosed him simply by His mere word, as He had made him come forth from the sepulchre; but He wished in this to have His disciples coöperating with Him, as intending to impart this ministry to His priests. Jesus raises, because by Himself internally He quickens. His disciples loose, because they, who by Christ are quickened, by the ministrations of priests are absolved: and Christ, Who quickens within,

Himself gives to His ministers the power of loosing."

Quesnel, of the whole application says: "The sinner being at so vast a distance from God, has need that God should speak to his heart in a very loud voice to make him hear. He whom the grace of Christ hath restored, must come forth as it were out of himself, and leave the darkness and corruption of his wicked habits. An habitual sinner does not easily get clear of all those bands with which he has bound himself, even though he have received the life of grace. It is God Who justifies him inwardly by His grace; it is the Church which looses him externally by her ministers."

Stier comments as follows: "The restraint and wrapping in which the dead man first comes forth, contains an allegory capable of discreet application to spiritual quickening. The relics of the grave which still hang round our limbs and face are to be removed by the Lord's appointment through the further ministries of men. . . . The Lord alone was serene and collected, as if nothing unusual had occurred: this is testified by His final word, in contrast with the silently intimated excitement of all the rest. It is no appearance, but the living Lazarus—venture therefore to approach him and set him free! Not only does he live, but in all his vig-

our and soundness—hold him, therefore, and lead him no further—*Let Him go*. As He before caused the stone to be removed, so now human hands are to do the rest: He Himself at first lays not His hand upon His friend. Without His commandment, pointing to their most natural and obvious duty, no one would have dared at once to approach the moving man. By the *loosing* the restoration to life was completed and confirmed, as by the food given in the case of the maid, and Lazarus was now brought to contemplate himself. He was to go to his house, where he would have time and place to utter his thanksgiving and show his love. The multitude should not then disquiet him by looking and touching, they were not even to go with him, but let him depart.”

First Thought.—It is very reassuring to dwell upon the calling of the dead out of their graves by the divine Lord before that great day of His final summoning them to judgment. For that final call is not for further probation; the destiny of all the dead is then irrevocably fixed, whether it be of bliss or of woe; but the call which it is our happy portion to hear while we are yet in this life, is the call to repentance. We are all of us dead in some sense, if not in mortal sin, which is true death, though not without

hope of resurrection, at least in the death-like slumber of indifference to spiritual things. We all of us fall easily into the torpor of perfunctory Christian living, our minds and hearts absorbed by the things of this present life, and well-nigh wholly deaf to the angelic voices which perpetually summon us to better things. Our Lord being very merciful, and not willing that any should perish, rouses us by His exceeding loud call, addressed in His own wonderful fashion to each individual as by name; *Lazarus, come forth*. The Master's voice penetrates our deaf ears sometimes by the way of great adversity, sometimes through the consciousness of unlooked-for mercy, as when one is suddenly delivered from a threatening disaster. Christ has many ways, all His own, of crying to the souls of the sleeping ones *Come forth*: happy they who hearken as Lazarus did that day!

We need not philosophize over-much concerning mortal sin, whether or not we ourselves be guilty of it: we ought to be sufficiently disquieted about our spiritual state, if we find that we are indifferent to divine things, inattentive and unloving in our prayers, selfish with regard to good works. Surely then we are sleeping as Lazarus slept, and have need of being called forth. Especially as one advances in years, and

grows in spiritual experience, ought he to have forced home upon his soul the consciousness of the great unreality of a large part of his religious profession. He is to be accounted happy indeed if he awake to the realization that the gracious Master is lovingly bidding him issue forth from his apathy, and live in earnest.

Second Thought.—Let us never fancy that because we are conscious of having awakened from the sleep of sin and been called by the Master to come forth from it, therefore our salvation is secured. It may be only that the day of that death from which the voice of the Son of God shall mightily call all flesh has been put off in order that we might have every opportunity of grace and salvation which the infinite compassion of our Lord can devise for us. Nor may we forget that we are still bound hand and foot with grave-clothes. What could more expressively describe the persistency and hopelessly hampering character of our evil propensities and lust? The miracle of grace is that we can still walk in devout ways though thus fettered. And our faces are covered with the handkerchief; we are yet unable to perceive the goodness and wonder of God's gracious dealing with us. We may not fancy we can long go on in such fashion. We must be unbound; we must

be given back our spiritual vision. Neither does our Lord do this part of the work in His own person, nor does He give it to the sinner to loose himself from the grave-clothes. That must be done in the Church, by her ministers. To them He has said, *Loose him, and let him go*. No man however converted should fancy that he is free from the necessity of availing himself of the ministrations of the Church, the regular ways of her sacramental life; no matter how miraculously he may have been called back from sin and worldliness by the very voice of Christ Himself; no matter how miraculously he may have been able at first, upon that call, to issue alone from the grave despite the enshrouding desires and appetites of the old life. He must be loosed from these, and the Church alone is empowered to loose him.

Third Thought.—The Master adds significantly to the command to loose, the words *Let him go*. This brings into prominence another and most important part of the soul's resurrection from sin. Our absolutions but restore us to the divine favour and to freedom of action. The battle with sin must be taken up once more, and perhaps the very same unhappy outcome of it may again be experienced. Let us not forget however that we sin the more deeply whenever

we lapse into our besetting evil habits after we have once been absolved. The penitent has much more than the regenerate man, who falls for the first time from grace, to make him guilty in God's eyes. The penitent has been made to know the love of God as no other can; he has been given greater gifts of celestial help than one who has never availed himself of the sacrament of Penance; he has had practical experience of the subtlety and the deep persistence of the tempter, such as none but a penitent can realize. Therefore if he fall after having been called back and unloosed, how shall he be saved again? Could Lazarus hope to be brought back to earth the second time, after death had again claimed him? Thank God that His lapsed penitents may be raised, even many times, but shall we depend upon that?

CIII.

"Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."—St. John xii. 7, 8.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Mary had poured the ointment upon Him for His burial, unconsciously, perhaps, and beyond her own thought, but rendered so by the event; or, it may be, that she had done so, even with some latent apprehension of the issue that approached. His frequent expressions of late respecting His own sufferings and death, though understood not by others, yet may, perhaps, have awakened in her some secret foreboding of impending ill; the sense of which, in addition to all the benefits she had received, had filled her soul with that deep and devout tenderness, which is ever wont to break forth in some outward expression of bounty. She had done it for His burial, which was at hand. Thus were our blessed Lord's words still recurring to this subject of His death. At the thought of this,

envy may be appeased, and covetousness itself, for this one occasion, may relax its iron grasp, the poor themselves will not grudge their Lord this one and last boon. At the burial of a friend all mankind are wont to be liberal and even lavish, to give vent to their natural feelings, and that too beyond what necessity requires, or any apparent expediency; even the poorest will suffer want, to lay up for the decency of their own funeral, or that of their friends. And, perhaps, in this observation respecting His burial, was contained a gentle remark to the traitor also, a prophetic allusion to His death, which would have moved even Judas had not money reigned in his heart. 'Mary had approached Him,' says St. Chrysostom, 'with much reverence and earnestness unspeakable.' The very costliness indeed proved the intensity of her zeal, which must have occasioned her to feel much such a repulse on the part of the disciples; for they, as the same writer observes, were full of high thoughts of charity, and ought rather meekly to have encouraged than rudely to stifle such efforts of an humble piety. And with regard to the good Mary herself, how did the words of our Lord hallow and exalt the action by this allusion to His burial filling it in that respect also with a mysterious consolation for herself hereafter!

For, knowing that she would be prevented from that last privilege of doing honour to His mortal remains, He shows that what she now did was a mystery, in embalming, though she knew it not, His body for the grave. Thus the humble actions of good Christians, done for God, and with a kind of instinctive sense of what may be pleasing to Him, and although they may be for the time like bread thrown upon the waters, yet bear onward to the future with some secret significancy; and because they are reproved by the world, are magnified and honoured by Christ."

And again the same author: "In what way can the spirit shown and accepted in this action be imitated by us? Money laid out upon Christ's Church seems in some sense like the embalming of His own Body below; and even when expended upon the material fabric it may partake of this blessing. The costliness of such offerings the covetous murmur at, and even weak disciples are carried away by their dissimulation. . . . Our blessed Lord's words in accepting this good deed seem to allow of such application to other religious actions. The expression, *Ye have the poor always with you but me ye have not always*, St. Cyril of Alexandria thinks, over and above the occasion on which it was used, contains also for us a rule of religious

observance; that though love for the poor is a thing of the very highest value, yet the worship of God is to be preferred before it;—and that it is here said as a part of the great divine dispensation, not as hindering the merciful from charity to the poor;—that when it is the appointed season for worship and divine service, we must set this before such charitable duties as may be performed at any time. And, indeed, beyond these observations of St. Cyril, it is evident; for the highest value ever set on charity to the poor is in that promise which considers what is done to the poor as done to Christ; from this very expression it of course follows that what is done to Christ Himself, is of all things the highest and best.”

First Thought.—Mary had brought her precious ointment to the feast, in order that she might there anoint the feet of the Lord. Judas had condemned her wastefulness, and had put himself forward as a champion of the poor; but the Master will not have Mary so rebuked. He chooses to glorify her deed of love as a veritable anointing of His body for the grave by anticipation. For it pleases Him to receive the gifts of love which His children bring to Him, and to use them in His own fashion though it may be out of all proportion to their fitness, and their

value from our point of view. It is the love wherewith the offering is made which constitutes its worth in His eyes; it is His love for the donor which qualifies the gift for whatsoever use He may put it to. Therefore we should never hold back, though our power of giving to Him seem very small, so long as it is the utmost we can do, if only it be accompanied by great love. But it is well not to forget the other side of the same truth, that seemingly great gifts are not of worth in His sight if they be not the best which we are able to give, and if they be not inspired by very real love for Him.

We truly anoint His body for the burying when we offer Him tears and deeds of penitence; for though our sins caused His death, our penitence makes that death full of glory and loveliness. It is the compensation which He asks at our hands for all His woes on our behalf. Therefore if we manifest true penitence, we bring Mary's precious spikenard, and anoint the Lord's feet.

Too often it is to be feared our penitence is but unreal, only saved from being hypocrisy because our weak wills really desire better things than we render. How far God will accept the sluggish and quickly passing acts of penitence which we perform for our sins we cannot tell; but it ought to shame us that we manifest so

little penitence, so little of the spirit of Mary with her box of precious ointment.

Second Thought.—There is hardly a form of covetousness more subtle than that which insists upon the necessity of large sums of money in order to the adequate relief of the poor, and finds excuse for not doing anything for them on the ground that one has not enough. God has been pleased to suffer the most of mankind to be poor in this world's goods, to be in need of help from their fellows; so the poor are always with us, but how greatly does that fact concern us? Does it beget in us a great desire to help and succour earth's needy ones; a love of self-denial on our own part in order that we may bestow the more; a free trustful supplying of whatsoever is necessary in each case, in so far as it is in one's hand or can be procured, even though one's bounty require the encroaching upon that which had been put by as apparently necessary for the morrow? Unless our almsdoing rise to the height of such implicit faith in God that we supply the genuine necessities of the needy without anxious thought for our own future, we have not learned the lesson which God would have us learn through the continual presence of the poor all about us. And unless also we keep in mind that to help the souls of

the poor, as well as their bodies, to pray for them, to heartily seek their salvation, is just as much a part of our Christian obligation as the temporal works of mercy, we shall but do the half of what God calls upon us to do by causing us to have the poor always with us.

Third Thought.—The Master adds, “But me ye have not always.” For it pleases Him to give us sometimes the sense of His presence in such ways as manifest dependence on His part upon our affection and our works of mercy on His behalf. Thus has He willed to make the dignity and beauty of His earthly temples dependent on the loving gifts and warm-hearted zeal of His servants. He has willed to tarry with us from time to time in the work of His sacraments, that we may welcome the opportunities when they come, and betake ourselves with alacrity to the altar and to the confessional. He receives, alas, but meagre proofs of devotion from many of His people when He thus puts them to the test. He permits us to realize at rare intervals His nearness to us in times of great sorrow, when His consolations are very evident; or in times of unlooked-for happiness, when we cannot fail to recognize His hand stretched out in blessing; nevertheless it very often happens upon such occasions that we are

so selfish in our sorrow or in our joy that we give but scant thought to His great goodness. All such instances are illustrations of the larger truth that He is with us *but for a time* under such manifestations as enable us to offer Him love and service. Through all the days of our earthly life, indeed, we may thus minister to Him, if we will; but earthly life at its longest is very short in comparison of eternity. We have Him not thus always; let us take heed, while we are spared, to minister lovingly to Him.

CIV.

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Phillip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Phillip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Phillip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—St. John xii. 20-24.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Perhaps the figure was, humanly speaking, suggested to our Lord by the circumstance of those Greeks being the *first fruits*; He Himself on His rising on Easter day was the offering of the first sheaf *on the morrow after the sabbath*; and the coming of the Gentiles on the day of Pentecost was the gathering in of the harvest. But the grain of wheat is often the emblem of Himself; as in the parable the seed is the Word; the grain of wheat, which is separated from the chaff, is the good Christian, who is born of Christ; and that

which is now the grain of wheat becomes *the Bread of life, the true Bread which cometh down from heaven*. The wheat is the Body of Christ, of which we partake, and by virtue of which communication to us our bodies also partake of resurrection. And now, our blessed Lord, recognizing in these Greeks a token of the Gentiles coming in, sees in it also the sign of His own approaching death. For the calling in of the Gentiles could not be till the Jews had rejected Him, and crucified Him. According to His instruction to His disciples, that they should not preach to the Gentiles till Israel had rejected them,—according to the rule of His own conduct,—and indeed according to this the economy of the Gospel throughout; whereby the riches of the Gentiles arise from the fall of the Jews. This connects the subject immediately with His own death. For thus ever closely united is His glory with His passion, Christ risen with Christ crucified; the marks of His sufferings are the indications of His risen body. He sees the Gentile and the Jew on the point of being combined together in Himself the Corner-Stone; but that Corner-Stone must first of all be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. ‘He Himself,’ says St. Augustine, ‘was the grain to be mortified and to be multiplied; to be mortified by the unbelief of the Jews, to

be multiplied by the belief of all nations. And now therefore He exhorteth to follow the steps of His passion.' ”

Stier comments as follows: “These guests at the feast were to see the cross succeeding the triumphant entry, and He presents to their reflections beforehand the solution of the mystery, and a relief from its offence in His words concerning the grain of wheat. Thus in a way in which no philosopher had ever spoken, He explains to them in brief His system. The disciples with the Greeks and the Greeks with the disciples, expect after the hosanna still greater things, His universal glorification; and the Lord tells them, Yea, verily, the hour is come; but my glorification will proceed differently from your thoughts of it.—By my dying will the divine energy of my humanity be set free and exerted for all mankind. For this He does not appeal to the testimony of the prophets, but to a secret prophecy of nature which His words immediately elevate and explain—of that nature, the manifestations of which the sensuous eye of the Greeks had profoundly observed without profoundly understanding. For that He signifies Himself by the grain of wheat, is evident from the connection with the former clause, as also from the *Verily, verily*. Yea, not only prophecy in Israel, not only the presenti-

ments and dreams of the heathen world, in which the dim traces of a primeval prophecy are to be discerned, but nature herself also speaks of the mystery of a redeeming death. That from death generally, which is the wages of sin, and, as properly death came first into the world by sin, new life is brought forth—is now a phenomenon and symbol everywhere witnessed.

“Since the fall was foreseen, and the redeeming death of the Son of God and Son of man already lay in the deep counsels of eternity, the Creator implanted types of it in His pure earthly creation before the fall. Thus we have here in the divine ordinance of the fruit springing from the seed, of the new growth springing from the death of the old, the most primitive prophecy of the mystery of the atonement and sacrifice which the pure creation contains.”

First Thought.—One can well believe that there were many people at Jerusalem at this time who looked for some extraordinary manifestation of our Lord's greatness and dignity. They were quite prepared to acknowledge Him the Messiah, did He but say the word. When these Greeks, who like the Wise Men at His birth represent the Gentile world, came to Him He declared to them plainly that the hour of His glorifying was at hand. He could not explain

to them then and there that that glorifying was to be by His death upon the cross, for they were yet unable to understand so great a thing: nevertheless He would draw them up to that thought little by little. Not by His works was He to be glorified, not even by such astonishing works as the raising of Lazarus, though men would naturally so think; but by the utter surrender of Himself to do the will of God in the sacrifice of the cross. Thus was He glorified in heaven on Good Friday, thus has He ever since been glorified by His faithful ones on earth.

It may always be said by us, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified," that is, in our lives. We ought to reproach ourselves because we have been so long in His service and have not yet glorified Him. We dream in our earlier days of doing so by the excellence of our example in holy living, by the fervour of our zeal in good works, by the rapture of our devotion. As we grow older, and come to know ourselves better, we realize that so far from glorifying our Lord in such ways, we are very miserable failures, our example is not worthy of imitation, our works are very selfish and inadequate, our devotion is not deserving of the name. How then can we hope that our Lord may be glorified in us? Only by the perfect

sacrifice of ourselves, for His sake and along with His sacrifice, by such absolute surrender of ourselves that His will may be done without hindrance in our lives. It is very hard to learn the lesson that in Christ's service there is no possible glorification save in the surrender of the disciple completely to the Master's will.

Second Thought.—Nor is there any lesson harder for men to learn than that if they would truly live and come to a glorious future there must be now, in this present life, the falling into the ground and dying. For what is it to fall into the ground, but as the seeds which drop from many thousands of trees and plants sink into the earth and are lost to view, so the servants of Christ must not aspire to shine as lovely flowers in the world, delighting men's eyes, or to be praised as noble fruits, blessing and sustaining many, but to be lost to view, forgotten, ignored, as insignificant folk of whom the world never even thinks; they are buried. We should be wise indeed could we but learn the blessedness of being nobodies in the eyes of men.

And not only to fall into the ground but to die also. One might be content to wait for recognition, as the costly jewel which has indeed fallen to the earth, but is sure presently to

be looked for and made much of when recovered; or as the gold and silver hidden in earth's recesses, and perhaps not thought upon by any for long centuries, yet secure in the fact of an actual worth which men must prize greatly did they but suspect its existence. In such case we might console ourselves for our insignificance by our inward consciousness of true worthiness—but to die, to acknowledge to ourselves that we are utterly unworthy and profitless, that our lives are a failure—that is not easy. Yet, says our Lord, unless this be our experience, we must forever abide alone. There is no hope in any life save through union with Him; we cannot come into union with Him unless we are content to die, even as He died. Only if we die with Him, shall we not abide alone.

Third Thought.—How is this sort of dying to be effected in our lives? It is not to be overlooked that we are not as our Lord, spotless and worthy victims for the sacrifice, needing only the splendid self-renunciation which inclines the soul unhesitatingly to whatsoever goal God may direct it.

1. We have first of all to die by self-conquest, the persistent life-long struggle to bring our unruly desires and affections into submission to our higher purpose and will. There can

be no service of Christ without self-conquest. Men dream of splendid and heroic sacrifices for the Master's sake, but such deeds profit but little the soul in which the lusts and passions have not been brought into obedience by uncompromising self-repression; the victim can only be worthy when his nature is modelled on that of the Lamb of God.

2. Then, secondly, there must be the glad and complete surrender of all our ambitions and life-plans to the single aim of doing only the Lord Christ's will. There is much fruit for heaven to be brought forth of such lives.

CV.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."—St. John xii. 25, 26.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Thus did our Lord at this time seize every opportunity to speak to them of His approaching passion; and pointed out that nature itself was filled with emblems of its virtue and energy, of which this coming of the Gentiles was as it were already the first-fruits. Nor was it inanimate nature only that abounded with these analogies and similitudes of life propagated by death, but more particularly should His own redeemed exemplify this living virtue of the cross, and so far as they were crucified with Him should they partake of the power of His resurrection. For His death was itself the great foundation of all Christian doctrine. And now, as He felt the coming on of that hour, in His own words of solemn asseveration, verily, verily, did He an-

nounce unto them this law, of death and suffering being henceforth from their connection with Him the door to life. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.* Even heathen philosophers had seen that a true love of life, or a love of true life, would sacrifice all things that appertained to the body, in order to cherish the higher and better life of the soul; but they knew not that cross from which this virtue flowed to mortification, nor that Example which made it sweet and sanctified it. This great principle may indeed be seen in the smallest matters, for experience will teach any one that self-indulgence deadens the sense of things spiritual, and that self-denial increases it: and therefore he that loves things heavenly must hate things earthly, which deaden and impair the sense of them, and make cold the love of them. 'Life is sweet to those who cling to its pleasures,' says Chrysostom, 'but when heavenly things appear it is as nothing. Personal beauty may please, but when greater beauty is seen it is despised.' 'He loveth his soul,' he adds, 'in this world who pursueth the desires of the same: he hateth it who yieldeth not to it when it desireth things hurtful. But He hath not said who yieldeth not to it, but who hateth it,

For in like manner as we cannot bear to hear the voice of those who are hated, and there is no delight in beholding them; so ought we earnestly to turn away from our soul, when it is enjoying things that are not pleasing to God.' And all this will flow from our following the example of our blessed Lord, and from the virtue that goeth forth from Him to strengthen us in doing so. *If any one would serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; and if any one serve me, him will my Father honour.* All true honour cometh from God only, and though the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, yet of the final reward it is said, *It shall be given unto those for whom it is prepared of my Father;* and they are addressed as, *Come, ye blessed of my Father.* God the Father will honour them, for they will be one with His beloved Son; in Him, and for His sake He will behold them. Infinite therefore will be the honour He will bestow on them."

Stier comments as follows: "As Bengel says, 'This world of itself draws us to love life,' consequently this is the strength of warfare and victory, to hate our own life in a world which forever solicits to mere false self-love, and lives in nothing but the element of self-destruction.

In this alone consists the true following of Christ, that which He requires of all who are willing to serve Him, to honour His supremacy, and pledge themselves to His rule. I will have, He says, no other serving than this following."

"Lange," says Godet, "with much depth of perception, points out that saying, *He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal*, included the judgment of Hellenism; for what was Greek civilization but human life cultivated from the view-point of enjoyment, and withdrawn from the law of sacrifice?"

First Thought.—There are many who may be said to lose their lives in this world; they attain to none of its distinctions, they have few of its pleasures, but poverty and insignificance, very often much hardship and pain are their portion. It would seem to be true from more than one saying in Holy Writ, that God is not unmindful of even such involuntary losing of the earthly life, but will compensate it in the world to come. There is, for example, the case of Lazarus in the parable, who seems to have displayed no higher virtue than patient fortitude in his misery. Because in this world he received evil things, in Abraham's bosom he is comforted. Doubtless there is required some

measure of acquiescence in the present loss of one's life, if there is to be a joyous finding of it in the world to come; we may not love that which the world can give, even though it be unattainable by us. The servants of Christ must willingly lose their lives here, that is, they must be so absorbed in the pursuit of things spiritual that the temporal things cease to have any value for them. In principle this indifference to the world's possibilities, the not loving one's life, must go on to the extent of being willing to endure any hardship or persecution for Christ's sake, whether it be the painful portion of difficult and self-denying vocation, or the afflictions endured at the hands of men, perhaps even martyrdom. The servant of Christ must quite willingly surrender everything which makes this life worth living, as men say, and be content to die, if need be, to further the Master's cause. So not loving his life here he shall not lose it eternally.

Not only, however, is he not to love this present life, he is positively to hate it. For this present life consists in the glorification of sensuality, covetousness, and pride. Men live here for pleasure, for money, for eminence and distinction among their fellows. The servant of Christ must feel a positive animosity towards the vital principles of this present world, which

have to do with the pursuit of these desires. Yet more must he hate such lusts in his own nature; for no one escapes the propensity to evil, the natural inclination to the things of the world and of sense. Too often they ensnare and drag down even the most earnest. Therefore the Master will have His followers put themselves in irreconcilable hostility to the ways of the natural life, and fight them in their own souls without truce unto the end. So shall we keep our better part unto life eternal.

Second Thought.—Very impressively does He teach us that the law of service is but following Him. We dwell much upon our works, the good things we do, the great things we would accomplish in the Master's service, but He insists only upon our following. In which are two necessary things.

1. The first, the patterning of our lives upon His earthly life, in gentleness, meekness, patience, helpfulness, unselfishness. It is vain to hope that we can serve Him by the most successful of good works, if we be not plainly striving ourselves to live as He lived.

2. Secondly, the tireless effort after holiness. For one might succeed in patterning one's outward life after His in lowliness of manner, in unselfishness of service, neverthe-

less there must also be found purity of heart and a clean conscience, if there is to be the following of the Master as heaven looks upon the matter. One may never for a single day cease from the effort to keep himself quite guiltless of every evil thing in the divine sight.

He adds that where He is, there shall also His servant be. When He spake that word He was entering upon His passion. Let us never forget that there can be no following of Him into glory without first sharing His passion in this present world. The believer who repines because of the trials and hardships of the Christian calling shows at once that he has no true understanding of the following of the Master. After the servant has been with Him in the bitterness of the passion, then, and only then, can he hope to be with Him also in the bliss of paradise.

Third Thought.—Our Lord everywhere insists upon the way in which the Father watches over His work and co-operates with it, and with a great jealousy, as one may say, for our Lord's honour. It is as if having consented to that infinite act of sacrifice which the Son undertook for man's salvation, the Father would care for Him in His humanity and guard Him with peculiar tenderness. There-

fore, too, because He so greatly loves the Son, He will reward all who are faithful to Him with especial honour. We must not forget that the very essence of anyone's worthiness to receive such honour at the Father's hand lies in the reality of his union with our Lord. As there can be no serving Him without following Him, no more can there be service which the Father shall delight to honour save that which is rendered the Son by His followers united in bonds of vital union with His very being. There can be no real worthiness in our service save as Christ works in and with us, because we are one with Him and He with us. That is the mystery of the sacramental life. There is no revealed way of maintaining vital union with Him save through the partaking of His Body and Blood. How much, then, ought our communions to be to us?

CVI.

"Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people, therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes."—St. John xii. 27-30.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Thus did our Lord draw us near to Himself by showing how deeply He partook of our fears and sorrows; as if to draw us on in and with Himself to something better. Of which St. Augustine beautifully says, 'Thou commandest my soul to follow, but I see Thy soul is troubled; what foundation shall I seek if the Rock gives way, I acknowledge, O Lord, Thy pitifulness, Who art troubled at the will of Thine own love; and thus in Thine own Body consolest many who are troubled by the necessity of their own infirmity, lest they perish with despair.' In

Himself, therefore, He, Who is our Head, took the affections of His members, and therefore on raising Lazarus, it is not said that He was troubled, but that *He troubled Himself*. And thus our Lord's perfect humanity was evinced."

St. Chrysostom also: "As He approached to the cross He showeth that which is human, and a nature not willing to die, but adhering to present life, showing that He was not beyond the reach of human passions. For as it is not a sin to feel hunger, neither is it to desire present life." St. Cyril of Alexandria, and Athanasius also, consider these expressions of our Lord's as setting forth the reality of His human nature; and, indeed, how else could He call on us to suffer with Him unless He truly suffered as we do? For our worst sufferings are those of natural fear and sorrow. For here, as in the agony in the garden, we have the voice of human nature shrinking from pain and death, and in the midst of natural apprehension the name of the Father glorified, and perfect resignation to His will expressed; showing us thereby that patience is evinced, not by the absence of natural feelings, but in not yielding to them.

Father, glorify Thy name. The thought that His sufferings were to God's glory was suffi-

cient, and thus did He express His most perfect acquiescence. And the Father, in wonderful union with the Son, expresses His perfect acceptance. As He had been already glorified in His lowly birth, and unerring obedience, so would He now be glorified in His death. *There came then a voice out of heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* For if our Lord spoke of St. Peter's death as the *death by which he should glorify God*, much more would His own death be glorifying God. But St. Augustine suggests that as He had glorified His name before the worlds were made, so would He glorify it again when Christ should rise from the dead. Perhaps we may reverently suppose our Lord's words applied to His own resignation to death, and those of the Father to that resurrection whereby He would glorify the Son. *The people, therefore, who stood by and heard it, said that it thundered; others said, An angel spake to Him.* These, perhaps, heard more distinctly something like the sound of words. Thus indeed it is always, that the divine Voice is heard more distinctly by different persons, according to the state of their own heart, which gives them *ears to hear*: by some it is heard merely as what they suppose the accidents of nature, as thunder; by some as supernatural voices; by some, as by the disciple of love, the

divine message is heard and understood. *Jesus answered and said unto them, This voice came not for my sake, but for yours.* As He had said at the grave of Lazarus, that for the sake of others, He spake aloud unto the Father, so now, also, for their sakes did the Father speak aloud unto Him.

Of the, "For this cause came I unto this hour," Stier says: "The expression of emotion is pregnant, and hints out its meaning. Bengel renders it; 'For this very reason have I come into this hour, that I might come into this hour and endure it.' Thus only, according to our feeling is justice done to this most impressive utterance, in which the most vehement *being troubled*, is accompanied by the most tranquil self-possession. As one puts it, For this cause, that I might drink of this cup to the dregs, and exhaust it, have I placed it to my lips. The thought which harmonizes the great contradiction, which writes in one the supplication for help and the resignation to God's will, and which perfectly responds to the *What shall I say?* is no other than this—The entering into this hour is the being brought out of it, the suffering is itself the deliverance."

First Thought.—Surely our gracious Master Christ is amazingly condescending in this rev-

elation of Himself, even as He is also when He permits us to know of the Agony and the Bloody Sweat in Gethsemane. For one has to endure trials and woes at the hand of God sometimes which seem insupportable, and one is, as it were, forced to cry out in his misery, "Father, save me from this hour." Presently we reproach ourselves because of our weakness and want of faith, we feel that we have sinned indeed in our failure to accept without outcry whatsoever God sends. But our Master Christ, in the day of His great affliction, was also troubled, and cried out to His heavenly Father, not murmuringly indeed, but deprecatingly at the first, as if His human nature could not endure the strain put upon it. We may well shrink from putting ourselves thus into our Lord's place, as if our afflictions were in any respect to be compared with His. Nevertheless, the story of His passion seems to have been made known with definite purpose of giving us help and consolation in our dark days. All our right to appropriate or not His words expressive of the reality of His humanity, depends upon our obedience in following Him, the sincerity of our discipleship. Those who give all their time and thought to the things of this present world have no right to fancy they may take the Master's words upon their lips when trials fall to their lot. They may

not cry, Now are our souls troubled, and what shall we say? Father, save us from this hour. Such a cry belongs of right only to those who live constantly in hard, self-denying fashion, as did the Master, who know that they are eagerly desirous of bearing every grievous thing along with Him, and only cry out because it seems to them that in their self-denying they have reached the end of their possibilities, while God is calling upon them for something more. If we know that we are living so, that we are gladly content to suffer to the utmost for Him, we need not fear presumption in making His words our own when heaven seems to exact of us more than human nature can bear. The cry in that case is not one of murmuring, nor yet of despair, but rather a beseeching of help, because one realizes that one's strength is gone.

Second Thought.—The story of our Lord's life is ever teaching us that God answers the cry of the human heart for deliverance from a burden too heavy to be borne, not by lightening the burden, but by supernaturally strengthening the bearer. So does He develop in us both perfect resignation and absolute confidence. The soul crying out for succour under its load begins to reflect upon the situation. I cannot refuse this cross, for then God's purpose for me would not

be effected. Why came I into such a situation as this at all? Why did I choose the way of the cross; why did I not keep well away from the possibility of meeting any such thing, by living as comfortably as I might in the world? Because I had it in my heart to serve my Master Christ. And how is that Master Christ served: by great deeds, by brave preaching; or by taking up the cross, and following after Him, with the consciousness of a crushing weight bearing one down to the ground? I know that this last is the sort of following He calls for. Then it must be that for the very sake of bearing the impossible burden I have drawn near to it. Shall I pray to be saved from it, when it is the very explanation of the fact of my Christian profession? Nay, I will pray, "Father, glorify Thy name." My one thought shall be that Thou mayest be glorified in me; therefore I offer myself willingly for the cross, leaving it with Thee to enable me to bear it.

Third Thought.—So complete was the Master's resignation, so absolute His confidence in His heavenly Father, that He needed no assurance of the supernatural voice to enable Him to rise up again under the burden of His cross, and go on untroubled. But thinking of us in our weakness, He willed that we should have con-

vincing proof of the divine interposition to bring our following of Him to a blessed end. We may confidently appropriate therefore the Scripture-given assurances that strength sufficient for all our necessities shall never fail us. It becomes one of the most difficult, yet the most absorbing of all lessons to be learned by us in this life, to simply take God at His word, and go on without any outward token that that word has been fulfilled.

1. We are never to doubt that the promised supernatural strength has been vouchsafed us, and finding out by exquisite experience from day to day that we are always able to bear every burden, to surmount every obstacle, albeit very often, after the task has been done, we cannot even understand how it was done.

2. We are never to have any hesitation about the result, whether or not we shall be given grace to persevere unto the end, but content to go on in loyal obedience day by day, without anxiety as to the outcome.

CVII.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said signifying what death He should die."—St. John xii. 31-33.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "The Lord here saith, *Now is the judgment of the world*, that is, apart from the final judgment, wherein the quick and the dead shall at last be judged. There was the devil, possessing mankind, holding men as criminals bound over to punishment by the handwriting of their sins; having dominion in the hearts of the unbelieving, dragging them, deceived and captive, to the worship of the creature, for which they had deserted the Creator : but by the faith of Christ, which was confirmed by His death and resurrection, through His blood which was shed for the remission of sins, thousands of believing persons are obtaining deliverance from the dominion of the devil, are joined to the Body of Christ, and quickened by His one Spirit as faithful members under so great a Head. This it was that He

called judgment, this discrimination, this expulsion of the devil from His redeemed. . . . The Lord, in fact, was foretelling that which He knew, that after His passion and glorifying, throughout the whole world, many people should believe, within whose hearts the devil was once, whom when they by faith renounce, then is he cast out. . . . But God forbid that we should imagine the devil is called 'Prince of this world,' in such a sense that we should suppose him to have dominion over heaven and earth. Nay, the term world is used to denote evil men, who are diffused over the whole earth; just as the term 'house' is used to signify them by whom it is inhabited; as we say, It is a good house, or, It is a bad house, not when we blame or praise the edifice of walls and roofs, but when we speak of the characters either of good or of bad men. So when it is said 'Prince of this world,' that is, prince of all the bad who inhabit the world."

Isaac Williams comments as follows : "The manifestation of Christ crucified, which was the consolation and recovery of the good, was the test and condemnation of the wicked. Now was the judgment, the discerning of spirits, the trial of character, the separation of the good from the bad, the winnowing of the wheat. Not that this coming of Christ was to judge, for He says, *I came not to judge*, but His words had

this effect. *The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him,* and therefore also He says, *For judgment I am come into this world.* . . . In human eyes this world was to judge Christ, the prince of this world was to prevail, and Christ was to be cast out. But in fact it was the very reverse to all this appearance; it was the exaltation of Christ, the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world to be cast out. Our Lord speaks of His cross, in His being lifted up, and drawing all men unto Him, almost as if it was His judgment-seat. So intimately are His cross and His tribunal connected together, that they seem as it were one and the same, are spoken of under the same expression, and as if the time intervening was as nothing. He is spoken of as thereby condemning or saving mankind, setting them on the left hand or on the right. So much was the cross the trial of men's spirits. Moreover, the mention of our Lord's greatness is almost invariably connected with His humiliation, and the mention of His humiliation with something that intimates His greatness: at the Transfiguration the discourse is of His decease at Jerusalem; at His condemnation He speaks of His coming in glory; and the marks of His humiliation, the cross, or the sign of the Son of man, will accompany His second coming to

judgment. So now, in speaking of His cross, He blends with it the mention of circumstances that intimate His Godhead. For this His speaking of drawing men unto Him implies His divine union with the Father, for He had before said, *No man can come to me except the Father Which hath sent me draw him*; and this very expression of drawing signifies, as St. Chrysostom observes, the exertion of power, and the forcible detention of spiritual powers of evil. It is this union of His divine and human nature which gives rise to the difficulty which these Jews cannot explain."


Stier also: "He Who being crucified, and by the cross lifted up to heaven, exhibits Himself by His Word and Spirit to the souls of men as crucified for them, in all the love of redemption, draws them to Himself by the might of His love. . . . Let it be also clearly apprehended that the promised drawing of all men, does not insure to all men that they must and will come; for the drawing is no enforcement, as He has elsewhere made clear."

First Thought.—Before our Lord's ministry culminated in His passion there was excuse for the world going on in darkness and ignorance of the truth. There is still excuse for large parts of the world to-day, for as much as the

light of the Gospel has not yet shined upon them. But just so soon as the truth of redemption had been proclaimed, the world was brought into judgment by it, was compelled indeed to pass judgment upon itself. If it persist in ignoring all that blessed revelation of God's goodness, and treat it as if it had never been given, the world condemns itself.

The same is also true of men individually. They may not without guilt put aside the fact of the existence of Christ's religion, with the demand it makes upon their obedience, sustained as it is by the Gospel story which cannot be successfully gainsaid. There are thousands who refuse to have anything to do with the divine religion; they protest that it does not appeal to them; it does not even interest them; nevertheless the very fact of its existence, and that it has been fully made known, brings their lives into judgment; they are responsible, and must be held accountable for their ignoring of it.

We may well tremble as we think of the sort of future those are preparing for themselves who here refuse to hearken to the voice of the Church, and will have nothing to do with Christ's religion; yet it may well be that we have quite as much reason to tremble for ourselves. We also are brought into judgment by



the fact of our knowledge of the truth. We have professed it indeed, and are outwardly loyal to it. But we know very well that much more than outward loyalty is required of us.

If we have indeed tasted of the good things of God; if we have made proof in our own experience of the realities of prayer, and worship, and holy sacrament, then how great devotion and spirituality of character are demanded of us, and how grievous a judgment must overhang us if we be not spiritually-minded, Christ-like, truthful, pure, and kindly. No man who has ever heard the story of redemption can be as though he had not heard it; while those who have been made to know it in the definite ways of the Church, may well be concerned as they dwell upon the responsibility for devout living incurred by that knowledge.

Second Thought.—By reason of the place of honour and dignity in this world, which God at the first gave to man, when he by sin transferred his allegiance from God to Satan, that Evil One became in a certain real sense “the prince of this world.” But from his temporary sovereignty he was deposed in the day that Christ bought back the world for Himself by His death upon the cross. Satan does not seem to be cast out, for he yet has many adherents

among the children of men, and rules over them with very real authority, because they are willing to have it so. We cannot see out beyond this world, but if we could, we should there continually behold the followers of the Evil One coming to their earthly end, brought before God to judgment, condemned, and cast out into the outer darkness. Their master still seems to bear rule because he is ever securing fresh subjects to take the place of those who are being lost in hell; but this condition continues only for a time. Just so soon as the great day of God shall come, all that remain of Satan's evil crew, with the arch-deceiver himself, shall be expelled utterly from the earth to be tormented forever in the bottomless pit. Short-lived must be the glorying of any who boast that the Evil One has not yet been dispossessed by Christ. They shall know the truth of that matter to their own unutterable woe in the day in which they pass out of this world to their judgment.

Third Thought.—It is good to dwell upon the fact that our Lord by His death brought into exercise an energy which should very really draw all men towards salvation. The universe is full of strange and inexplicable forces; we recognize their existence, we can trace them out in many of their workings. In the cross of

Christ there is that which leaves no man in all the earth just as he would have been but for it. It has brought to everyone who has lived thus far, and it will surely bring to everyone who has yet to dwell upon the earth, the opportunity of a blissful eternity. It matters not that countless souls have not recognized the gift offered them; it has been theirs nevertheless, and if it have not of itself brought them salvation, as in the case of those who have died before any knowledge of the Gospel was granted them, it has supplied them with sufficient consciousness of duty to enable them to choose between the good and the evil; and if the good were their choice, to insure their everlasting blessedness. The might of the cross has drawn, now draws, and will draw all men upon the face of the earth, whether they be conscious of it or not; though millions refuse to be drawn, turning away from it to follow the devices and desires of their own hearts. Should it not be for everyone of us matter of the deepest concern, whether or not the cross be drawing him to eternal life?

CVIII.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them."—St. John xii. 35, 36.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "*Yet a little while*, signifies that His death was a removal; for the light of the sun is not destroyed, but having retired for a while appears again. *Walk while ye have the light.* Of what season doth He here speak? Of the whole present life, or of the time before the crucifixion? I for my part think of both, for on account of His unspeakable loving-kindness, many even after the crucifixion believed. And He speaketh these things to urge them on to the faith, as He also did before, saying, *Yet a little while I am with you. He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.* How many things, even now, do the Jews, without knowing what they do, but

walking as though they were in darkness? They think that they are going the right way, when they are taking the contrary; keeping the Sabbath, respecting the law and the observances about meats, yet not knowing whither they walk."

Isaac Williams writes thus: "If they would live according to those holy precepts given them, then would God protect and lead them to truth; but if they did not, a spiritual darkness would overtake them; regardless of mercy and justice they would go on to do what they little thought of, to put to death One Who was no less than the Son of God, God equal to the Father—taking part with the prince of darkness. Perhaps His words allude to something more terrible even than this, that blindness of heart which would not only put to death the Son of man, but then reject the Spirit also, sinning against the Holy Ghost, and involving themselves in that darkness which has from that day to this overtaken them as a nation, and is the type of a worse darkness. But of some among them He hoped better things, that by living according to the light given them, they would be able to believe in Him, Who was the true Light, and to become His children, purifying themselves even as He is pure, so that they might have eyes to discern God.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may become children of light. Whether the sun were now setting, to furnish the figure and add force to the words, does not appear; but certainly St. John seems particularly apt to bring forward those expressions of our Lord which indicate that all nature is mystical and shadowy, and that things divine only, as seen in Christ, are substantially real and true. For the sun about to set, and soon again to rise, was the most significative emblem which our Lord has given the world of Himself, and daily set before us to remind us of His death and rising. And if it were, as we suppose, a Sunday the expression of light might have a further reference to that day, on which the light of creation and the light of redemption also broke forth. But more than any such external correspondence could have done, did our Lord's own conduct on this occasion add a great and awful solemnity to His words. It was perhaps, on His part, in order not to force upon them that Light which condemned but reformed them not; as if once more, in gracious pity, not allowing Himself to be more fully manifested before them. *These things spake Jesus and departed, and hid Himself from them.*"

Sadler says : "These were the parting words of Christ. They seem an exhortation to accept

Him, and walk in Him, not only during the few hours before He was crucified, but during the day of grace which would be opened by His departure. Then one who spake in His name said, perhaps to some of these very men, *Unto you God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*"

And Stier: "It is a condescending though deeply significant manner of speaking, which attributes to them a certain having of the light which was only externally offered to them. In this gracious admission there lies further the solemn truth, that for Israel the prophetic office of Christ must pave the way for the influence of His priestly office. Whosoever altogether failed to hear Him, as He taught and testified, to him no new light of life would break forth from the redeeming death; but that which was to the Gentiles a Gospel, became to the previously unbelieving Jews, as the result on the mass bore witness, no other than the loss of light."

First Thought.—Just what our Lord meant when He said to the Jews, "Yet a little while is the light with you," is not perfectly clear; probably He meant the application of it to be indefinite because the saying would have different

meanings in different cases. The Jews as a nation had the Gospel in their midst until the holy city was destroyed by the Romans, A.D. 70. Nevertheless the greater number of them were so prejudiced against Christ that the light of His truth was never perceived by them after His death.

It is most profitable to think often upon the uncertainty of the continuance of the divine light with us. When our Lord says that the Jews were to have that light but for a little while, He surely warns us that we may also have it but a little while. We may feel very confident that it shall be ours so long as we live, yet how can we know that? We might lose our reason; we might be so separated from the services and sacraments of the Church that our faith being no longer sustained by them should fail. And even if we retain the blessed light of holy religion throughout our earthly days, how know we that those days may not come to an end with the morrow? It is certain that none of us prizes as he ought the blessings of the Gospel, the revelation of the divine goodness which we have in the Catholic religion. May we not keep it as our own forever? Yes, if we will. The Master warns us just in order that we may be solicitous about it, and take heed that the light fail us not.

There is even for the most earnest the grave peril of becoming perfunctory and unreal in one's religion. We grow into a routine of devout practice, and rest content with ourselves because we are keeping and observing that with great fidelity, while all the time the spirit of true devotion to our Lord may be disappearing from our lives. The sun sets so gradually some days that one does not realize it is growing dark till suddenly he finds it too late to accomplish that which he had to do. Only persistent self-questioning and heart-introspection can ensure our not losing the light.

Second Thought.—When our Lord adds, “Walk while ye have light,” He surely means that we should be energetic in availing ourselves of the light. There are only two ways in which any one can walk in this world; the broad way which leads down to death, but is very smooth and pleasant to walk in, and where one may find much agreeable companionship—for those who live without God in the world are often the most delightful people socially, and very attractive in their personal lives. The other way is the narrow and stony footpath which leads to eternal life. When the Master bids us walk we know that He means along this hard unlovely way in which only He is to

be followed. But the walking is so painful that we are fain not to go on. We are ever allured by the attractiveness of that broad and easy way of death; or if we are strong enough to resist turning aside into that, we greatly desire to sit down where we are, or to sleep; anything seems preferable to travelling upon the hard and narrow way.

But there is grave peril, the Master says, lest darkness overtake us before we have finished our journey. We may fancy that in the world to come we shall have light enough to find our way to heaven even though we have not walked as He has bidden us here. Men talk very confidently about universal salvation, as if it were certain that if we have not done anything very bad we shall not suffer hereafter; but all who so believe are walking in darkness, they know not whither they go. The servant of Christ is not in darkness forasmuch as our Lord has spoken very plainly upon such matters. He needs however to take heed lest he leave too much of the strait way which leads to eternal life to be travelled in purgatory; perhaps only to find that after he has gone forth from this world he is still in darkness, and at last to have the horrible conviction forced upon him that the divine light has for him gone out forever.

Third Thought.—The Master comes back in that grandly-simple fashion of His to the fact that we must walk by faith, in this world, not by sight; or rather that the believer's organ of vision is his faith. In our weakness and earthliness we cry out that we cannot see the light; God hides Himself, we cannot feel sure about things. Nevertheless we have the light; we have all the fulness of the divine revelation, we have all the abundance of the divine grace. He says, Believe in the light. Can we not take Him at His word, and go on bravely in the way, though it seem to be hopelessly in the dark? The faltering soul cries out that it knows not even how to keep its faith. It would accept the Lord's word; it does not really doubt Him; but there is no response of one's nature to the effort of the soul to believe, the mind fails to grasp the mystery, the imagination refuses to picture the spiritual reality. What of that? We are only called on to walk as children of light. Is not the child content to go along after the father without insight, without imagination? The characteristic of true childhood is obedience, filial trust, and that is ever the first lesson of the Gospel. We have often in our Christian walk to turn and become as

little children, that is, to follow in simple obedience: so doing we always become the children of light, and cease to walk in the darkness of sin.

CIX.

"Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him That sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth Him That sent me."
—St. John xii. 44, 45.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "The whole state of men's dispositions, and therefore, of course, their daily lives, as connected with those dispositions, is in some manner proved in the sight of God, by their believing in Christ or not. This, the very foundation stone of all Christian morals, was declared by Christ Himself in very memorable words, which the Evangelist records in connection with this subject; but it is not apparent whether it was spoken on this occasion, that is, on the evening of Palm Sunday, or on the following day after driving the buyers from the temple, as others place it; or after the completion in the temple of all His discourses during this week, as others suppose; it appears certainly to have been with a marked reference to the timidity of those who were afraid to confess Him. *But Jesus cried out and said*, as if with some great emphasis, and

in the hearing of them all, as on a former occasion in the temple, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him That sent me. And he that beholdeth me, beholdeth Him That sent me.*"

St. Chrysostom comments as follows: "As though He had said, Why fear ye to believe on me? Faith passeth to the Father through me, as doth also unbelief. See how in every way He showeth the unvaryingness of His Essence. He said not, He that believeth me, lest any should assert that He spake concerning His words; this might have been said in the case of mere men, for he that believeth the Apostles, believeth not them but God. But that thou mightest learn that He speaketh here of the belief on His Essence, He said not, He that believeth my words, but, *He that believeth on me.* And wherefore, saith some one, hath He nowhere said conversely, He that believeth on the Father, believeth not on the Father but on me? Because they would have replied, Lo, we believe on the Father, but we believe not on Thee. Their disposition was as yet too infirm. Anyhow, conversing with the disciples, He did speak thus: *Ye believe on the Father, believe also on me;* but seeing that these men were too weak to hear such words, He leadeth them in another way, showing that it is not possible to

believe on the Father without believing on Him. And that thou mayest not deem that the words are spoken as of man, He addeth, *He that seeth me seeth Him that sent me.*"

Sadler paraphrases the verses thus: "Do I ask men to believe in me as the Son of God? The very idea of Son carries the thought back to the Father. Do I ask men to believe in me as the Sent? The very idea of one Sent fixes the idea on the Sender. Do I ask them to believe on me as the Messiah or Anointed? That of necessity requires that they should believe on Him Who anointed or sanctified me, and His purpose in so doing. *He that seeth me seeth Him That sent me.* Here is an advance on the preceding. Is belief consummated in spiritual vision, so that even here faith becomes inward sight? Then he who thus sees me sees Him That sent me, for we are One: One in goodness, grace, power, love, wisdom, as well as One in Essence."

The Bible Commentary says: "The witness of the Lord is set over against the witness of the prophet and the unbelief of the people. It expresses as completely as possible His absolute self-sacrifice as contrasted with the selfishness of His enemies. He is lost (so to speak) in Him That sent Him. He judges no man, His teaching is simply the expression of His

Father's command. The testimony was so given as to claim and arrest attention; and it was given once and for all. *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him That sent me*, that is, he looks beneath the surface and acknowledges a divine presence realized in and through me. As yet it was impossible for men to know how faith could repose in the Son Himself. So too, on Him That sent me, is not simply on the Father, as representing a general connection, but on Him Who is the Source of the special revelation of Christ."

First Thought.—It is written by the Evangelist that our Lord cried and said, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him That sent me"; and the word translated "cried" signifies a great vehemence of utterance, a loud crying, as if He would do His utmost to call the attention of all the multitude to that which He was saying, feeling, as He did, its importance for their souls. They saw in Him only the carpenter's Son, a wonder-worker indeed, but wonder-workers were not very rare in those days. He was discredited and denounced by the scribes and rulers, and there was already a falling off in His popularity. But He would not let slip any opportunity of winning some of them, so great was His

thirst for their souls. Therefore He vehemently reminds them that He does not ask them simply to acknowledge Himself, but to believe on Him That sent Him, that is, the Father.

Would that we, in our vocations, might manifest some measure of our Lord's eagerness to save souls! We ought to be ever crying aloud to those among whom we live and work, by our daily lives, by our earnest words when the opportunity of speech is given us, that they should believe on God and be saved. We are not unaware of the personal unworthiness of our lives; we know that just as men in old time pointed to the Master's worldly insignificance, so now can they taunt us with our want of learning, our unfitness to set up our doctrine against that of the scholars and wise ones of this world. Much more can they with truth urge against us, as they could not against our Master, that our personal lives bear anything but noble tribute to the power of the religion which we profess—nevertheless we must insist that our unworthiness as its preachers is nothing against the doctrine of Christ. "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him That sent me." We are to insist upon the excellence and the divinity of our Master Christ. His personal worthiness is an unanswerable argument, and we must not weary of

presenting it; the world can never produce His peer.

Second Thought.—What is the signification of the amazing story of our Lord Christ, which has come down among men these past nineteen hundred years, and has affected most deeply the whole life of the nations? It is the love of the heavenly Father for a lost world, for the souls of men who were going down to hell. It is easy to fall into the way of thinking of our Lord as no more than the gracious Ameliorator of the conditions of human life upon earth. That is a very beautiful aspect of His mission, but an utterly inadequate one. Nor is it enough to think of Him as so uplifting and spiritualizing such as will follow Him, that upon their passing from this world they are assured of a blessed immortality. The doctrine of the Gospel is much more wide-reaching than that. There are mysteries in it which we cannot hope to solve, but we know that its final aim is that of a perfected universe, through the lifting up of the free creature man, by the divine grace, into union with his Creator; that so the fulness of the glory of God might shine forth upon a flawless creation. We cannot stop anywhere in the Christ-story short of the fulness of the glory of God the Father without

marring the whole. Therefore we ought to be ever striving to free ourselves from such unworthy conceptions of our religion as that it is merely to make life better worth living here, while the eternal life, if there be one, will take care of itself. Rather we should seek to so further the divine cause more and more in the world, by living spiritual lives, that we may loyally do our part in bringing about the perfect glory of God in His creation. It is not enough to live for one's self, nor even for one's neighbour, but above all for God, that His will may be done.

Third Thought.—Because we are such frail and weak creatures as we are, it is likely that we shall often come short of rising up to so high a conception as that of living in order to promote the eternal glory of our heavenly Father. Therefore the Master adds, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We need not fear because our spirits fail to mount in their aspirations so high as the celestial throne, for in serving our Master Christ we do perfectly the whole will of the Father for us. He condescends to our littleness in order that we may be able to work in His cause. He ordains countless small vocations in that infinitely great work of His, the raising up of a universe

which shall adequately declare His glory to His creatures, in order that there may be for the least of us a place in the work, a place to be properly filled by no one save ourselves, and which though it be of itself most insignificant, yet becomes glorious and worthy because it can only be filled by the soul through union with Christ, and because of His co-operation with the work of each of His servants. It is all important that each one should recognize his life work as a divine vocation assigned him of the Father, and then take heed stedfastly to maintain his union with Christ in the devout life, for without the Master's co-operation the servant's work cannot be accomplished.

CX.

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever belleveth on me should not abide in darkness."—St. John xii. 46.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "Since the Father is called by this name everywhere both in the Old Testament and in the New, Christ useth the same name also: therefore Paul also calleth Him Brightness, having learnt to do so from this source. And He showeth here His close relationship with the Father, and that there is no separation between them, if so be that He saith that faith on Him is not on Him, but passeth on to the Father. And He called Himself Light, because He delivereth from error, and dissolveth mental darkness."

St. Augustine also: "He said in a certain place to His disciples, *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let*

your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven. Yet He said not to them, Ye are come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on you should not abide in darkness. It is impossible that this should anywhere be read, I do assure you. Lights then, all the saints are: but, by believing, they are made light by Him from Whom if any man depart he will be made dark: whereas that Light by which they are lighted cannot depart from Itself because it is unchangeable altogether. We believe then (or give credence to) the light which is lighted, as a prophet, as an Apostle: but to that end believe him, that we may believe not on the man himself, being that which is lighted, but with him on that Light by which he is made light; that we also may be made light, not by him, but with him, by the Same of Whom he was enlightened. Moreover in saying that *Whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness,* He makes it plain enough that He has found all men in darkness; but, that they may not abide in the darkness in which they were found, they ought to believe on the Light Which is come into the world, because by it the world was made."

Sadler says, on the words *I am come a Light into the world*: "This also, I think, if taken

in connection with the rest of this short discourse must be taken with reference to the Father. The Father is Light, but He is the Light which no man can approach unto. In Christ alone we see His Light—the Light of His holy character, of His wisdom, and of His truth. So then no one can walk in the Light of God, except he walks in the Light of the revelation of the Son of God.”

The Bible Commentary adds: “The office of Christ was to make all things clear. His Person when seen in its fulness illuminates the mysteries of life. There is darkness over the world, and without Him it must remain.”

First Thought.—When our Lord speaks of a man as abiding in darkness it is plain that He means that darkness is his present condition. And this is exactly what the Gospel teaches us, but which we are very slow to accept, that is, that by nature, and unless our Lord Christ enlighten us, we are in darkness, and must remain so.

1. There is the darkness of misery and sin. It is easy for those who are well-off in this world's goods, to look upon the bright side of things, and to lose sight of the pain and sadness and want that encompass one on every side, especially in our great cities. Of a truth

our Lord's coming into the world does not seem to have altered things in this matter much for the better. The darkness remains unrelieved save as here and there, in isolated instances, conditions have improved as a result of the proclamation of the Gospel. Men do not always admit that they are naturally in darkness, because of the prevalence of ignorance and sin. It is difficult to dispute it, however, if one be fair-minded. Nothing could be much more lamentable than the blindness and folly with which vast multitudes pursue evil ways, and apparently do not so much as dream of anything better. The wretched, as the result of long-continuance in their wretchedness, grow into a certain fatalism of outlook; things never have been any better for the teeming millions, they never will be any better. And it is not different in the matter of sin. Men sin as a matter of course; they are beset by the most cruel and persistent of temptations; how can they help sinning? The standards of right and wrong are of necessity lowered in the popular estimation; abstractly this or that must be acknowledged sinful, but the world accepts it as inevitable, it does not blame men for doing it.

2. Again there is darkness of conscience. The natural man is in ignorance concerning a great many questions which arise. It is not

that he is indifferent to the right, and with a certain hopelessness insists that wrong must be tolerated; but rather that he is very far from clear as to what is right and what wrong. Conscience will not speak unequivocally when brought face to face with the issue; it is unable to decide.

3. Yet once more, poor fallen man is in gross darkness by reason of his ignorance as to the future. The fact of a future is vaguely admitted as probable by every one, but of what sort it is who can tell? The more daring spirits among men put forth their theories and hypotheses, but every reasonable thinker knows that such theories and hypotheses are worthless; there can be no evidence for them. They are but figments of the imagination. Yet there is nothing man more eagerly yearns to know than the truth concerning the future. He is in utter darkness with regard to it, and must remain so until God be pleased to reveal it.

Second Thought.—It is to a world thus in darkness that our Lord, the Son of God, made man, comes, as its Light. As its Light He meets every craving of the darkened world with divine certification of His right and power to enlighten it.

1. The darkness of human misery and pain

He has not wholly taken away, but has assuaged it with wonderful consolations. He has revealed to men that by endurance of the afflictions of this present time, with patient and hearty acquiescence, they qualify themselves for great joy and blessedness hereafter; and there is something in human experience which teaches earth's sufferers that hard as the practice of this doctrine seems there is reason in it, and they are content to bear their pains because of the recompense of their patience, which is promised. So, too, our Lord appears as the Absolver from sin—to human understanding an impossible thing, and yet one which, when we think of Him and His cross, it is not hard to accept. The Church's doctrine of absolution, however assailed, however rejected by self-satisfied ones, will always be eagerly welcomed by millions who are oppressed with the sense of sin.

2. Again the gracious Christ is the Light of the world in illuminating the human conscience. It is amazing how clearly His revelation speaks in defining right and wrong, laying down precisely the whole law of human duty. Some may still profess to be of doubtful conscience, but they are only such as refuse to acknowledge the authority of His revelation.

3. Yet once more; He is the Light of the

world as clearly revealing the future. We may urge that there is much that is vague and unintelligible in the Bible concerning heaven and the things to come—who, for example, can comprehend the Revelation of St. John? But to speak so is only to evade the real issue. There is absolutely no question that Christ's Gospel reveals most plainly the all-important facts which every man has to look forward to hereafter, concerning death and the judgment, hell and heaven. The light shines even though we shut our eyes and refuse to admit it.

Third Thought.—The Master declares that He has come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Him should not remain in darkness. There must be a believing on Him as the Light, if one is to escape from the darkness of the world.

1. There must be patient acceptance of His teaching concerning the beneficent working of temporal pain and misery in our lives. There must be a conscious willingness not to have our way made easy for us in this world; and there must be a hearty turning to Him for absolution from our sins. We must take Him simply and frankly at His word.

2. There must be the unfeigned effort to set up the divine standard of duty in our lives, and

live obediently to it, no matter how impossible some of its requirements may seem to the natural man.

3. We must study persistently, by means of prayer, worship, and meditation, to know the truth concerning the unseen and eternal things as He reveals it to us, in order that we may grow little by little to accept the fulness of their reality as a matter of course, and to delight in it.

CXI.

"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."—St. John xii. 47.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "Remember what I know you were told in the former lessons; and you who may have forgotten, recall it to mind; and you who were not then but are now present, hear it now. In what sense saith the Son *I judge him not*, seeing He saith in another place, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son*, how, but that we are to understand, at present judge him not. Why not judge at present? Mark what follows: *For I am not come*, saith He, *to judge the world, but to save the world...* Now, therefore, is the time of mercy; afterward will be the time of judgment: for *Of mercy*, saith He, *and of judgment will I sing unto Thee, O Lord.*"

And the Bible Commentary as follows: "Christ now passes from the thought of His Person to that of His words: from me to my sayings. Faith is essentially personal; unbelief

stops short at the outward manifestations of the Person : it deals with the teaching. Two cases appear to be regarded, the first that of the respectful hearer, who listens and does nothing; the second, that of the man who refuses to listen at all. . . . There is no personal element in the accomplishment of the final issue. Christ came for judgment, and yet not to judge. The judgment followed naturally, so to speak, from His manifestation. The Law (in the fullest sense) is the one accuser. Men simply remain where they are if they do not come to Christ. Their sentence lies in the nature of things. In this case the hearers were self-condemned.”

First Thought.—Our Lord plainly intimates that a great responsibility arises out of the fact that men have heard His words. He must have known that millions would turn a deaf ear to the Gospel story, yet He required His followers to proclaim that story to the whole world. It would seem to be true that no one who has heard the Master’s words thus proclaimed can entirely escape responsibility with regard to them. He created the human understanding and the human conscience; it is reasonable to believe therefore that He has framed His doctrine to meet the capacities of the human understanding and conscience. Yet it is true also that

it seems well-nigh impossible for some men to believe. Therefore He says further : "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not." Each man has a judgment of his own within himself, as God has created him; and the measure of his responsibility for the way in which he receives the Gospel story is inevitably fixed, so that he cannot escape it. If then our Lord refuses to judge those who believe not, it is certain that we ought not to fancy ourselves qualified to pass judgment upon unbelievers. It is a perilous thing to denounce this one or that one for unbelief, forasmuch as we cannot possibly know to what extent such unbelief is criminal in each case.

A far more profitable line of thought is that which leads us into the secret chambers of our own lives, and reveals to us the large place which unbelief seems too often to hold there. We are not avowed unbelievers—on the contrary, we are devoted to our Lord, and ardent in our professions of discipleship. Nevertheless our worship is almost always cold and formal, our prayers full of distractions and wandering thoughts, our good works few and apathetic, our self-denials meagre and very grudging. We certainly believe but feebly when our discipleship is so languid.

We plead that to believe in such high and

unearthly things as our Lord's words reveal is so far beyond the natural powers of the human mind and imagination, it is not wonderful that our faith is unreal. But that is quibbling, for if the matters upon which our faith is to be exercised were not high and unearthly, they would not be proper subjects of faith at all, but of knowledge or of reason. The trouble is a lack of will-power. Faith to apprehend the mysteries is the gift of God, yet it is freely offered us, and needs only to be appropriated by the human will. No one can mount up to any faith worthy the name, save by hard climbing, by persistent effort of the will. There is comfort in the thought that our Lord is not standing over us now as a taskmaster, judging every feeble and half-hearted effort to believe; nevertheless, we may not forget that although we may be allowed ten thousand fresh efforts to rise up to faith, we shall surely be required to show that we have attained it at last, in the day when we are called on to give account.

Second Thought.—What wealth of compassion there is in that word, "I judge him not." He must judge at the last, but until that day shall come He refuses to judge. He knows that there are countless energies at work for good and for evil in the recesses of each soul; that

there are all sorts of inclinations, longings, desires, drawing at the heart of each one's life, to bring it over, either to the side of evil or that of good. All manner of yet undeveloped possibilities lie in every nature, full of latent energy to bear good fruit or ill. He will not judge until everyone of these energies has found its proper vent and has played its part in fashioning the soul for eternity. He knows well enough what the result will be; nevertheless, He continues day by day lovingly to hearken to all our prayers, graciously to intervene in all our difficulties, dealing with us as if we were most loyal and deserving children, servants whom their Lord delights to minister to and to honour. We are even ready to assume that because we are conscious of ceaseless evidences of our Lord's affectionate solicitude on our behalf, we cannot but be in the state of grace, securely walking in the narrow way which leads to eternal life. Do not so delude thyself, O soul; the favour thou experiencest may be no more than the long-suffering of God which calleth thee to repentance. He will leave nothing undone that might further thy salvation, for He overshadows thy life, not now to judge, but to save.

How needful, then, it must be, if He be not judging us, that we judge ourselves! That we

cease not day by day to probe the secret places of our souls, and make sure that we are loyal and whole-hearted in our discipleship. It is a blessed thing indeed thus to judge ourselves; many a soul has so been warned in time and brought to saving repentance before the day of the all-deciding judgment of the Master. Yet wiser ones learn to distrust even their own judgment of themselves, and to carry their life-story systematically into the tribunal of penance for judgment at human hands; the tribunal in which God's priest sits as the merciful judge, not to condemn and to punish, but to enlighten and to heal those who resort to his heaven-appointed court.

Third Thought.—We cannot too strongly accent that sombre truth which Scripture everywhere reveals, though men persist in refusing to admit it, that the whole world is hopelessly lost in sin and wickedness, and if not rescued by God must end in the wretchedness of the outer darkness. We say, There is a great deal of good even in unregenerate human nature; and that is true, in a sense, because God's grace does not cease to work with every man, be he regenerate or unregenerate, so long as he is in this world. It is certain, however, that we owe every shred of hope we have of blessedness here-

after to the will of Christ to save the world. We ought, therefore, to dwell continually upon this happy and inspiring thought; that the whole wealth of the divine love and wisdom and power is enlisted on behalf of our salvation. God would not have one single soul perish. Therefore, too, how hopefully ought we to work for our own salvation, and for that of those who are dear to us. Every earnest effort to save a soul must be crowned with success where there is such celestial co-operation. And yet there will probably be millions lost, and it may be ourselves among the number; certainly our salvation is not yet assured. But why? Must it not be because we are not enough interested in the saving of souls, our own and those dear to us, to second our Lord's effort to make sure their salvation with genuine and worthy striving in the way of His commandments?

CXII.

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath One That judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."—St. John xii. 48.

Exposition.—St. Augustine comments as follows: "He saith not, *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words*, I judge him not in the last day. For had He said this, I do not see how it could but be contrary to that sentence in which He said, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son*. But when He said, *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath One That judgeth him*, and, while they were waiting to know who that should be, went on to say, *The word which I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*, He hath made it manifest enough that it is He Himself that will judge in the last day. For it was Himself that He spake, Himself that He preached, Himself that He set as the Door by which Himself should as Shepherd enter in to His sheep. So then they will be judged in

one way, who have not heard, in another they who have heard, and have despised."

Isaac Williams says: "Thus does He speak, as holy fathers observe, in condescension to the weakness of His hearers, more attentive to what might profit them, than to His own dignity. Moreover, the words, as coming from God, are founded on eternal truth, of power and weight ineffable, and therefore, as we are told, more enduring than the heavens and the earth, and which will alone stand at the last day; words that serve for the discerning of spirits now, and for their condemnation at the last; words piercing the soul asunder, and dividing the reins, so as to enter into and to try the inmost heart of mankind; words containing in them immutable verities and hidden virtues, which angels desire to look into. And the sum of our Lord's teaching is this, that to keep the commandments of God is everlasting life: for the word which He hath spoken shall judge us at the last day."

And Sadler: "There the Lord, in mercy to men's souls, reveals the fearful converse. He came not to judge, but to save; but yet His Word judges, both now, and at the last day; for His Word is the Word of God. He hath not spoken of Himself; every word that He spoke was ordained in the counsels of the Father; and

so His Word, as He had said before, tries men, whether they are of God or not. This Word separates between men even now—tries them, sifts them, brings out their characters—and at the last day the Lord to Whom the Father has committed all judgment, will make good that award which His word being the word of the Father, has already made.”

Stier says: “*The rejecteth me and receiveth not my words* is not merely a despising, but a scornful and utter rejection instead of the receiving. That the spoken word itself (with a strong as it were personal and living *the same*) will be the judge, is a bold and true expression, since it is not an empty word, it can never be spoken in vain. On the one hand it abides as a judge in the memory and conscience till the last day; and on the other, it will on that day, though only for condemnation, be reproduced in the mouth of the rejected Saviour, then the Judge. The word is, of course, not an isolated word; but the sum and substance of all the sayings which they had heard.”

The Bible Commentary adds: “The resumptive isolating pronoun (the same, literally that) places in emphatic prominence the teaching which is regarded as past and separated from those to whom it was addressed. It stands, as

it were, in the distance, as a witness and an accuser."

First Thought.—It is significant that our Lord's solemn warning of the judgment at the last day, is in this verse given in connection with those who reject, that is, put aside Himself, and receive not His words. They are only His opponents, hardly enemies, even negatively, as one may say; they but disregard Him and His teachings. That does not seem to most men a very grievous transgression, nor would it be if He had not right over us, and every claim upon our loyalty and love. To reject Him is as if a son rejected his father; filial piety is an obligation, not merely a thing useful and desirable for children. We ought never to admit the principle that there is no positive act of sin, no great offence, in refusing to serve Christ, when once the claims of His religion have been presented to the soul. There could hardly be much more grievous sin.

More fearful still is the sin of him who having once served and followed the Master, does so no longer. It is like a son who for a time recognized his filial obligations and performed them, but afterwards refused to do so. Unhappily there seem to be many among the ranks of nominal Christians of whom this is true.

They once were communicants, they now no longer frequent the altar. For years they went regularly to confession, now they have given that practice up and even speak against it, seeking to deter others from going. Of old they worked in the Church, and gave liberally of their means to its maintenance, now they have lost all interest in it. Surely such folk are to be reckoned among those who reject Christ, and receive not His words.

We may not have sinned so seriously, yet we ought not to permit our conscience to go unexamined in this matter. Is there the love and devotion to the Master there used to be in our lives; not necessarily the consciousness of a great affection for Him which we once felt, for that is an uncertain thing; but is there as much steadfastness in service, as much hearty obedience, as much self-denial as there was formerly? To lapse gradually from one's earnestness and loyalty of service is quite as truly to reject Christ, and to receive not His words, as by formal and open departure from the ways of the Church. We cannot too carefully scrutinize our lives as to their steadfastness in the Master's service.

Second Thought.—Very striking is the way in which our Lord identifies Himself with His

word, that is, with His doctrine and revelation of the divine truth. That ought to be a very convincing fact to any true follower of His who might have doubts concerning the fullness of the inspiration of Holy Scripture—His Word is so wholly His that it is as Himself, and becomes the judge of mankind. Not only does such a saying give us fullest assurance concerning the inspiration of the Gospel, but likewise concerning the supernatural efficacy of the sacraments, and of the prayer of faith.

1. The sacramental words bring us into very touch with the Lord Himself, for they have power to lift the natural into the realm of the spiritual. The Master's own words, uttered by the priest at the altar, are no mere rehearsal of the facts of the first institution of the Eucharist, but potent forces to transmute the bread and wine into His very Flesh and Blood. He has willed that His word should thus have power. In the confessional, too, the same thing is true in another manner. The human priest says, "I absolve thee from all thy sins," and it is certain that our Lord makes that word His own, having commissioned His priests thus to minister in His name.

2. Yet again there is His sure promise to His faithful ones in their daily intercourse with Him in prayer. Prayer is but a feeble thing in

itself, the poor words of sinful man—save only that great prayer of the Lord, the Our Father, which stands alone; yet prayer accompanied by hearty belief in Him is always accepted by Him and made His own, so that it becomes His word laden with omnipotence to effect that which is prayed for. In all these ways He identifies Himself with His word, and we receiving His word are joined to Him.

Third Thought.—There is the other side of the same truth, that this word, which He here identifies with Himself, is to judge us all at the last day. All along the pathway of our life, from the day we first began to receive instruction in heavenly things from our parents in childhood, the word of our Lord has been bearing its testimony. Every sermon we have heard, every lesson from the Bible which has been read in our hearing or by ourselves; every sacrament we have made use of, every answer to prayer which we have experienced—has been a witnessing to our souls on the part of that word. We may have forgotten much of its testimony; we may have heeded little of it. But when the soul issues forth from the body, and finds itself standing before the All-holy Judge, then shall every one of those voices of the word which

has sounded continually in our lives, be heard pronouncing our judgment.

The soul can interpose no defence, all that is witnessed to is too plainly true to be gainsaid in any way, nor does the All-holy Judge have to intervene save to pass the inevitable sentence of Christ, which His words that have sounded in our ears all the days of our earthly pilgrimage then become; they are many words of many kinds, nevertheless they make up but the one great Word of His revelation of Himself, for that is no other than Himself, now our Saviour, at our death to be our Judge.

CXIII.

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father Which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."—St. John xii. 49.

Exposition.—St. Augustine comments as follows: "How does the Father give commandment to the only Son? With what word speaketh He to the Word when the Son is Himself the Only-begotten Word? By an angel, when by Him the angels were created? By the thunder-cloud, which when it sounded to the Son, sounded not for His own sake, as Himself elsewhere saith, but for others' sake, who behoved so to hear? By a sound emitted from the lips? Whereas He hath no body, neither by any interval between place and place is the Son separated from the Father, that there should be between them the intermediate air, by percussion of which a voice should be made and come into the ear? Far from us be such surmises concerning that incorporeal and ineffable Substance! The only Son is the Word of the

Father, and the Wisdom of the Father : in that are all the commandments of the Father. For it is not to be thought that what the Father commandeth, the Son somehow knew not, that it should be necessary for Him after a while to have what before He had not. That which He hath from the Father He received in that sort, that He, by being begotten received, the Father by begetting gave. . . . Life He gave, for, in begetting Life what gave He but to be Life? And because the begetting itself is eternal, at no time was the Son not in being, Who is Life; at no time was the Son without life; and as the begetting is eternal, so is He That was begotten, Life eternal. So, too, in respect of the commandment : not what the Son had not did the Father give; but as I said in the Wisdom of the Father, Which is the Word of the Father, are all commandments of the Father. Moreover, the commandment is said to be given in regard that He to Whom it is said to be given is not of Himself; and, to give to the Son that which the Son never was without, is the same as to beget the Son Who never was without His being."

And St. Chrysostom: "Seest thou not that He bringeth His expressions to an excess of humility, that He may both draw those men over, and silence those who should come after. This is why He uttereth words befitting a mere man,

that even so He may force us to fly the meanness of the sayings, as being conscious that the words belong not to His nature, but are suited to the infirmity of the hearers."

Sadler says: "This is apparently the one view which the Lord desires that all men who heard Him should have—that in His wondrous words there is nothing of His own, nothing, if one may say so, original, as being His apart from His Father. Looked at from our point of view, never were words so original as the words of Christ. Even infidels, in commenting upon them, have said that in the sayings of Jesus there is that which is absolutely new; but that originality which good men very rightly ascribe to Him, He here repudiates, and refers all He has, and all He knows to the Fountain of Deity, the Father."

Of the "what I should say and what I should speak," Bengel writes: "The word here translated say implies the use of brief and colloquial language; that translated speak is used of copious and set speech."

And Stier upon the same: "We ought to understand the emphasis of the two-fold expression as Brandt does—'Jesus declares His words to be without distinction, thus forbidding us to make distinction, the words of His Father, words which were all of them given Him of

God.' Thus the real what and what, is equivalent to as many as, embracing every one of them, whether His words be termed saying or speaking."

First Thought.—It is almost impossible for us to conceive a life so completely in obedience to God that one could say concerning it, there was never a word spoken in it save according to the divine direction. We pride ourselves upon our originality; we are persuaded that we often think deeper thoughts and more wonderful thoughts, perhaps truer thoughts, than most of those about us; and we like to give utterance to speeches which show our originality or our cleverness. There is apt to be much self-satisfaction in thinking that our words are our own, we hardly at all dwell upon the fact that they ought to be all prompted and controlled by God. It is because of our self-sufficiency in speech that we sin so much in our words. One may say that it is impossible to confine one's language to subjects inspired by God, and that may be true in a sense, because we are very earthly and unspiritual creatures. Nevertheless we do not half try as we might to say only those things which God would approve.

1. We love to maintain our independence of thought and utterance upon all sorts of ques-

tions, many of them having to do with the divine religion and with right conduct. The believer knows that he has no right to speak of himself upon such matters. God has revealed all truth and all moral principles from heaven, and we are bound to accept that which He has taught, and to speak always in accordance with it.

2. We will not be restrained in our harsh and uncharitable speech when we are angry with others, fancying ourselves wronged. We have strong likes and dislikes, and are wont to be severely critical. In our temper and in our pride we do not so much as think that we are pledged as disciples to follow the Master Who spoke not of Himself.

Second Thought.—Our Lord leads us on to a yet higher conception of this matter of our speech. It is not merely that in a negative sense we should not speak self-sufficient, or uncharitable, or even idle words; that is most true, of course, and it is likely that more souls will be condemned to eternal woe for their words than for their deeds. But more than this we are to recognize the power of speech as bestowed upon us to further the glory of God. He has given us a commandment concerning what we should say and what we should speak. And that there

is this twofold characterization of our language, whatever other meaning it may have, certainly requires us to admit that no part of our speech is freed from such authorization from God. He claims for Himself and His service all our words, not only those more formally spoken, and in the carrying out of our special vocations, as the preacher when in the pulpit; but just as much our ordinary conversation in every day life, which must often be upon very unimportant matters. To be sure we may not always insist that whatsoever is spoken of our Lord is also spoken of His followers, but in this case that must be true in a very real way in the nature of things, for He is setting forth the conditions of His humanity, in which He is altogether our Example. We should strive never to be off our guard in our words, whether speaking in formal fashion of the things of God, or in the freedom of casual conversation. Whatever we say should be to the glory of God, at least in affording evidence to those who hear us that we have the fear of God before our eyes; that we reverence and honour Him; that we would have all men whom we can influence in any way to love and honour Him also. Though we have no commandment or direct inspiration as the prophets of old, we have commandment

always so to speak that men may perceive us to be disciples of Christ.

Third Thought.—While we have no personal message of inspiration to deliver to the world, we must not forget that our Lord had, and that the word which He delivered by commandment of the Father is of the utmost consequence to mankind. He seems to say in this verse that every word of the Gospel which He has made known to the world is in the fullest sense inspired. We may not, as some are fond of doing in these days, maintain that many of the words spoken by our Lord were not of consequence to the revelation of His truth, and therefore expressed no more, nor had more exalted inspiration, than the words of other men of His time; so that He might easily have made statements about Moses, and David, and Jonah, which were not literally true, but uttering them according to the accepted ideas of His contemporaries. If that were the case, how could He here declare that He had commandment from His Father what He should say and what He should speak, that is, with regard to His every utterance? It is the old faith of the Church that all of our Lord's words, the least as well as the greatest, are infallibly true, and incapable of correction. Therefore we may never tolerate

any of that modern critical teaching which puts limits to His knowledge, while on earth, as if He had laid aside His omniscience. Every word of His was spoken by commandment of the Father, and of necessity has the Father's perfect knowledge behind it; therefore, with never faltering confidence the believer treasures all the recorded sayings of the Master, and delights to draw from them all spiritual strength and consolation.

CXIV.

"And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."—St. John xii. 50.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says : "Seest thou the humility of the words? For he that hath received a commandment is not his own master. Yet He saith, *As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.* Hath He then power to quicken whom He will, and to say what He will hath He not power? What He intendeth then by the words is this : 'The action hath not natural possibility, that He should speak one set of words, and I should utter another.' *And I know that His commandment is life everlasting.* He said this to those that called Him a deceiver, and asserted that He had come to do hurt. But when He saith, *I judge not,* He sheweth that He is not the cause of the perdition of these men. By this He all but plainly testifies, when about to remove from, and to be no more with, them, that 'I conversed

with you, speaking nothing as of myself, but all as from the Father.' And for this cause He confined His discourse to them to humble expressions, that He might say, 'Even until the end did I utter this, my last word, to them.' What word was that? *As the Father said unto me, so I speak.* 'Had I been opposed to God I should have said the contrary, that I speak nothing of what is pleasing to God, so as to attract the honour to myself; but now I have so referred all things to Him, as to call nothing my own. Why, then, do ye not believe me when I say that *I have received a commandment*, and when I so vehemently remove your evil suspicion respecting rivalry?"

"'For as it is impossible for those who have received a commandment to do or say anything but what their senders wish, as long as they fulfil the commandment, and do not forget anything; so neither is it possible for me to say or do anything except as my Father willeth. For what I do, He doeth, because He is with me; and *the Father hath not left me alone.*' Seest thou how everywhere He showeth Himself connected with Him Who begat Him, and that there is no separation?"

On the words "I know that His commandment is life everlasting," Sadler writes: "Is this said with reference to Himself or to us?"

Of course, God's commandments are life everlasting to us creatures; but the Lord had been just speaking of His Father having given Him a commandment, *what to say and what to teach*. Now, if all He said was commanded by the Father, some of the things which that Father had commanded Him to say were things which would inevitably bring about His crucifixion. And yet, in perfect trust that His Father would support Him through that crucifixion, and bring Him back to life, He said all, knowing that the everlasting life of His people would be the result of His obedience unto death."

And Stier: "Here the commandment is the commission what He should speak and testify. This commission is, in its ground and aim, according to its design and indwelling power, no other than life everlasting for all who believe. It is the will of God that all who receive the Son should receive and preserve life. This embraces the true concluding idea of the entire recapitulation — Jesus had thus faithfully spoken, that all, according to the Father's will and His own, might be saved if they would."

First Thought.—Nothing could be more inspiring for the believer than this simple word of our Lord, "I know that His commandment is life everlasting." How could He know it,

since in His human nature He had not yet experienced it? We may not take the word "know" as equivalent only to believe or have confidence. Our Lord had personal knowledge of all things in the divine counsels, for He is Himself divine, God the Word. We may not without grievous heresy ever think of Him, even in the days of His humiliation, as lacking perfect divine knowledge concerning everything, however He may have chosen to conceal certain things from His human mind, so as not to know them as man. In this case His knowing is but the statement of His divinity. He assures His followers that He knows the Father's commandment to be life everlasting. In the divine omniscience He has seen it all; therefore we may not hesitate to take His word for it. We are often not content with that; we insist that knowledge is better than belief; we wish above all things that we might have some vision or personal revelation of the good things of the world to come. But that is a great disparaging of our Lord Christ and His teaching. Can we not trust Him, can we not believe that which He declares to us? But we cry that we are not even sure of Him, we do not know Him. That is our own fault, for it is certain that we may know Him if we will. Does not the Apostle write, "I know Whom I have believed?" Does

not St. John speak of having seen Him, and looked upon Him, and even handled Him? You may say that St. John was among the Twelve, and of course knew the Lord personally. But in very truth we may know Him no less convincingly if we will. Have we never known Him in the sacramental life, in Holy Communion, when the Host was lifted up on high; has the conviction of His presence never been ours on such occasions? At least there is no one who has learned to pray heartily, that has not been vouchsafed personal evidence of the Master's nearness. Those who have come to find the daily answers to their prayers, which are given with amazing abundance, know their Lord personally; and one has improved his spiritual opportunities but little who has not gotten on so far in the life of prayer as that. When once we know Him there can be no difficulty in resting with absolute dependence upon His words.

Second Thought.—The Master graciously reveals to us the great fact which is most important for our lives, the fact which He knows by His omniscience, that the commandment of the Father is everlasting life. His one desire for every human creature is that that creature may attain to eternal blessedness. His commandment, everything which He requires of us,

is but for that end. The commandment often seems hard, well-nigh impossible.

It seemed so to our Lord's human nature in the garden of Gethsemane, when the cup was given Him, which might not pass from Him. The cost of His obedience to the divine commandment was the Bloody Sweat; yet He hesitated not, for He knew that the Father's commandment was life everlasting for all the human race, and He desired above all things to win that for those, even ourselves, whom He had designed to make His brethren. The Father's commandment was not easy of execution when on the cross it called upon Him to go down into the valley of the shadow of death, the utter darkness of desolation, where it should seem that even God had forsaken Him. Nevertheless He knew that the commandment, inexorable as it was, meant life everlasting for all those who should accept the Lord's loving sacrifice on their behalf.

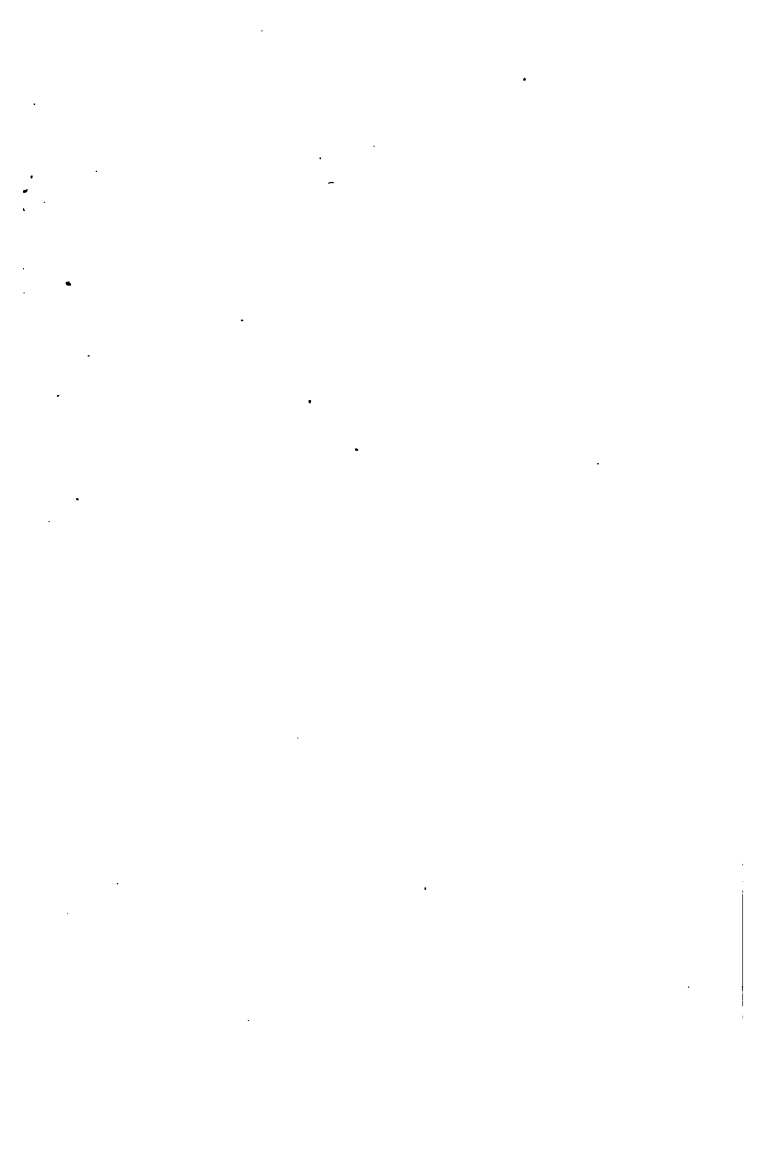
We may well believe that the Master gives utterance to this wonderful saying very largely on our behalf. It is always hard for us to accept the orderings of Providence in our lives; we persist that we could be so much better Christians, and do so much more for the divine glory, were things not as they are. We fail to keep in view the supreme fact that God's com-

mandment is life everlasting; He is but seeking our eternal blessedness; He has no other design in fashioning our lives as He is doing but our salvation. We cannot say I know that His commandment is life everlasting, but we can say, I believe unquestioningly in my Master Christ Who has given me abundant assurance upon this point, and I am persuaded that He knows.

Third Thought.—What an ideal for the Christian teacher is furnished us in this last word of the Lord to the disobedient Jews: "Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." He would convey no message but that entrusted to Him from on high. How much of heresy the Christian world would have been spared, had the preachers of Christ's Gospel taught only what He had entrusted to them, and all of that without reserve! Happily the original deposit of the truth has not been lost, the Catholic Church has been true to her trust, supernaturally guarded from error by the Holy Ghost. Let us never plead that we cannot have certainty in these days concerning the doctrine of Christ. That is not true. We know all that has been handed down from the beginning, and all that has not been so handed down we refuse to know.

It is a great thing to know the truth, to be absolutely sure what we must believe and do; but it is a greater thing to supplement our knowledge with obedience. Happy the souls who make it the one aim and study of their daily walk to carry out loyally whatsoever Christ has revealed in His Church, without self-will, without question!







RITCHIE, Arthur
Spiritual studies in St.
John's Gospel.

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